

The Freeman

VOL. VII. No. 180.

NEW YORK, 22 AUGUST, 1923

15 CENTS

CURRENT COMMENT, 553

TOPICS OF THE TIME

- At Last—Why Not Before? 556
Drugging the Young Idea, 556
Tired of Democracy, 557
An Iridescent Dream, 558
A Wedge for China, 558

MISCELLANY, 559

POETRY

- Blind Time, by Herbert S. Gorman, 560
English of the Melting-Pot, by Louis F. Post, 560
"Partir—C'est Mourir un Peu," by E. S. H., 562
Mrs. Hartigan and the Titanic, by Henry Longan Stuart, 563
Another Gateway to Panama, by Townsend Hills, jun., 564
The Prophet, by Moïssaye J. Olgin, 565

THE THEATRE

- The Swedish Ballet, by Florence Gilliam, 566

BOOKS

- Ancient Egypt, by Robert Hillier, 568
Mr. Cannan's Novels, by Alyse Gregory, 570
The Problem of Mr. Sitwell, by Edwin Muir, 571
An Approach to Symbolism, by Edward Sapir, 572
Mephistopheles and the Brute, by Bertrand Russell, 573
Shorter Notices, 573

A REVIEWER'S NOTEBOOK, 574

CURRENT COMMENT.

Nor much is known of the new President, Mr. Coolidge. He comes into the Presidency as a mere sport of chaos, tossed up out of the political Malebolge by sheer chance. His record contains nothing of interest and nothing of promise. He gained a certain parochial notoriety a little while ago, under circumstances which, as our neighbour the *Nation* showed at the time, were by no means creditable—circumstances of which, at least, one would hardly expect a sensitive person to avail himself. Such of his writings as we have seen have not impressed us deeply, or suggested that his intelligence is to be regarded with respect or even with seriousness. Nevertheless, we have no wish but to think of him, in common with the rest of our fellow-beings, as well as we can; and we sincerely hope that he may go through his tenure of office with the utmost possible credit.

THIS paper never expected to see the day when it would modestly shy its caubeen into the arena of national politics. Even now it is not quite ready to do so, but it must confess that its resolution is considerably shaken by an insidious and persuasive suggestion of Dr. Charles P. Steinmetz that has been much quoted in the press lately. Dr. Steinmetz was discussing new tendencies in politics, a third party, and all that sort of thing, which we regard, as a rule, with only a perfunctory interest. Presently, however, we were caught by the remark, thrown off in ever so casual a way, apparently, that it might be a good thing to elect Henry Ford to the Presidency "just as an experiment."

THE suggestion stuck in our craw, and still sticks there. "As an experiment"—we can not make the thing seem unreasonable or unwise. We have had all kinds of Presidents; from a great intellect like Jefferson down to the veriest mudhead; from a hidebound and truculent old Tory like Adams to a rather easy-minded sort like Lincoln; from a rich man like Washington to some who were none too well off; from strong and stubborn characters like Jackson and Cleveland to some rare invertebrates; from men of charm and manner like Buchanan and Arthur to some who were pretty boorish—and so on. Seeing that there have been in all but thirty Presi-

dents, the assortment is really quite remarkably varied. We have had all sorts of lawyers, soldiers, politicians, orators, spellbinders; but we have never had a President who brought with him a very conspicuous record in the world of affairs.

HENRY has such a record, if ever anybody had one. He comes as near being a pure industrialist as anyone can; that is to say, privilege has cut hardly any figure in his success. We hear that he has not even availed himself of that commonest form of privilege, the patent; so that if anyone thinks he can crowd Henry to the wall by copying his cars, the whole wide world is open to his enterprise. If the accounts which we get are true, Henry is very nearly the primitive type of commercial manufacturer. He buys raw material (scoffers say that he buys it from the American Tin Plate Company), processes it and works it up into a finished product, and then distributes and sells the product; and all with such efficiency and acumen that in twenty years he has raked together a whopping fortune, and you can't beat him.

WELL, then, if government be really a business, as some say it is—the communal business of all of us in our collective capacity—and if such a thing as a "business-administration" be really possible, and if the taxpayer can ever really hope to get anything like a dollar's worth of government for a dollar, it seems to us that Henry ought, more than anyone else, to know how to realize all these desiderata. None of our Presidents in recent years has seemed to know how; that much is certain. For our part, as our readers know, we do not believe that government is a business or that a business-administration is anything but a flat contradiction in terms; and if the country put its ablest and most successful man of business at the head of the Government and he should make an inglorious fizzle of it, as we are sure he would, the experiment would furnish some small amount of additional evidence for our view of the nature of government. That, perhaps, accounts for our inchoate interest in Henry's candidacy. If government be in any sense a business, Henry ought to make a great fist at it; if it be the mere organization of larceny, as we think, he could not be expected to do much with it. Hence we can not help feeling that Dr. Steinmetz's suggestion has points, and that the experiment would be worth trying.

ELEVEN political prisoners, members of the I. W. W., who recently elected to serve out their long terms in Leavenworth jail rather than accept the doubtful form of conditional release devised by the Department of Justice, have issued a statement setting forth in detail the reasons for their decision. Under the conditions imposed, the men must take a formal pledge of good citizenship; and any of them could be taken back to jail without further court proceedings if, in the opinion of the President, he became "connected with lawlessness in any form." The prisoners point out that the pledge exacted is virtually an acknowledgement of guilt, which could be used to establish a precedent for other unjust convictions. The other condition they denounce as a tyrannical assumption of executive power which would make them an easy prey

for unscrupulous employers and subservient minor officials. Under the cat-and-mouse formula, they assert, they could be reincarcerated at any time for a technical violation of some sweeping injunction making all ordinary labour-unionist activity illegal, such as the injunction obtained by the Attorney-general in the railway-strike; or if they ventured into the State of California, mere membership in their organization would make them law-breakers under a decision recently handed down by a judge of the Superior Court.

THESE points seem to us to be well taken; and so is the contention of the prisoners that the whole process of pardons or imprisonments "at the pleasure of the King" is a revival of evil practices of the dark ages. Forty prisoners of opinion are still held in Federal jails serving their monstrous war-time sentences. It is to be hoped that other pressing duties will not prevent the new President from making a thorough and dispassionate investigation of the plight of these victims of prejudice, and it is equally to be hoped that he will be stirred by a profounder sense of justice in this matter than either of his two most recent predecessors in office. From the point of view of justice and humane feeling, the case for release is unimpeachable; and as a practical matter it seems odd that the Government, representing what it does, should continue to present an organization like the I. W. W. with the moral prestige derived from the useless martyrdom of these men.

THE CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF FARM BUREAUX is wrestling with the problem of what is alleged to be the unfair competition of the motor-truck with the railways, and is reported as favouring legislation that will compel the motor-transportation companies to pay increased taxes or licence-fees for the upkeep of the public highways. The extent to which the new transport agency has entered into competition with the railway in handling short-haul freight is perhaps more clearly shown in California than in most other States, and it was inevitable that the issue should be raised, whether the motor-truck should be made to pay a larger share of expenditures for improved roads. However this matter may be settled, that innocent third party, the ultimate consumer, will be the victim as usual. If the motor-trucks are taxed they will have to charge a little higher freight- and express-rates for hauling farm-products, or carrying goods from the towns and cities to the farms. It is easy to tax all kinds of industrial and commercial enterprises, but the trouble with most of these methods for getting some easy money is that the tax is passed along, often to the very persons who thought that they were taxing the other fellow.

THE COAL COMMISSION'S preliminary report on the anthracite industry contains some interesting facts concerning the payment of royalties to landowners. It appears that about one-third of the anthracite is mined under leases providing for royalties running as high as \$1.50 per ton. Since the price at which coal is sold is practically the same for all the anthracite mines, it is evident that the mining companies owning their land are adding what is the equivalent of royalties to the price paid by the public. The Commission states that many of the leases contain provisions for an increase in the royalty when the selling-price of coal advances; with the result that each increase in price is made the occasion for higher royalties, and this, again, an excuse for higher prices to the consumer. The operator contributes to the production of coal the capital invested and the managerial ability; the worker contributes the labour; the receiver of royalties contributes the permission of labour and capital to dig on his land.

RECENTLY Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, who holds the position of Postmaster-general in the British Cabinet, presented his estimates before Parliament. Next day, when the reports of his speech appeared in the press, they were accompanied by a gossiping laudation of the Postmaster-general and his achievements, which had been thoughtfully provided for the press by one of his subordinates. The Minister was unaware of this attention until he saw the newspapers; and immediately he went again before the Commons, this time in a blaze of indignation that he had been placed in the position of having lowered the dignity of his office through a venture in self-exploitation. "My attention has been called to certain paragraphs containing vulgar and stupid personal puffs sent to the press gallery of the House of Commons yesterday," he began, and went on emphatically to repudiate the blurb, and to assure his colleagues in the House that in future nothing of that nature would come from his Department.

WE take great pleasure in recording this incident, for it indicates a sense of decorum all too rare in political placemen. During the war it became the habit of political executives both in England and our own country to maintain at the public expense their personal press agents who ceaselessly celebrated their masters with the moral fervour and the shabby technique of publicity-hounds in leash to a chorus-beauty or a patent-medicine firm. We believe—though Englishmen may think this an extravagant claim—that the United States suffered more from this sort of prostitution even than the England of Northcliffe and Lloyd George. The public in both countries naturally grew thoroughly sick of the endless chorus of self-praise from political bunglers, and this state of mind had no little to do with the subsequent political overturns. The public gets tired of hearing even Aristides continually called "the Just."

THE puffing habit still hangs on, however, though generally in a somewhat subdued fashion. We are informed that during the past two years one member of Mr. Harding's Cabinet has been able to maintain an extensive personal publicity-organization which has operated in Europe as well as in the United States; but we believe this is exceptional. These are quieter days, and we suspect that the gentleman in question has not profited greatly. The member of the executive family in Washington who has gained most in public esteem is the unobtrusive Mr. Mellon; and this is as it should be. None the less, Sir Laming Worthington-Evans has set an admirable example in dignity and good manners, and we trust that Washington as well as London will take notice.

SPEAKING of this business of puffery, we have perused with interest a number of the apparently endless instalments of the story appearing in the *New York Times* under the signature of Mr. Roy A. Haynes, United States Prohibition Commissioner. Mr. Haynes is greatly impressed with the virtue, integrity, moral purpose, efficiency and indefatigable zeal of his bureau and its considerable personnel, and he writes of these matters unweariedly and impressively. It is unusual to discover a public officer who draws such inspiration from his duties, and who displays such happy self-assurance and enthusiasm. Mr. Haynes indeed gives the impression that he is convinced that his devoted labours are to bring on the millennium with a rapidity which is somewhat disconcerting to ordinary sinful mortals. One infers that we Americans are already much improved in morals, character and health as the result of his ministrations, and if only he

is kept on the job we are on the way to become virtually superhuman.

THIS is an encouraging prospect, and we are prepared to accept it in principle, as the politicians say, even though at times Mr. Haynes appears to be unduly optimistic. In one of his recent instalments he gave the impression that drought had settled down on Broadway; and in another he stated that synthetic gin was disappearing. These things may be clear to Mr. Haynes at his desk in Washington, but they are not visible to the naked eye in New York. The casual wanderer on Broadway can not get very far without stumbling upon an oasis whose heady springs include an adequate supply of synthetic gin. Indeed, if gin be vanishing from this section of our planet, there are no indications of it, and it seems odd that the price has fallen so low in the face of an official scarcity. We are informed by an expert in such matters that a dependable product of the juniper-flavoured stuff can be obtained generally in our town at a price about one-fourth of the rate prevailing two years ago. Our source of information is so reliable that we are forced to the conclusion that Mr. Haynes has a romantic nature, to say the least; and we are moved to speculate whether it would not be advisable for him to throw over his position of rum-hunter extraordinary and herald-plenipotentiary to the millennium, and devote his great talents exclusively to fiction of the lighter sort.

THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN is printing the memoirs of General Hoffmann, who served as Chief of Staff on the German eastern front, and after the Russian armies disintegrated, dictated the peace of Brest-Litovsk. According to the General, in the spring of 1918, when Germany secured a brief numerical preponderance in the west, he was in favour of beginning a purely defensive campaign there against the Allied armies and the increasing American forces, and meanwhile denouncing the peace with Russia, marching the remaining eastern divisions to Moscow, overthrowing the Bolsheviks and setting up "a new Russian Government," presumably on the Tsarist order, to be upheld by German bayonets. Then General Hoffmann proposed to make a new treaty with this presumably grateful regime, restoring most of the territory stolen at Brest-Litovsk. His theory was that in this fashion a new ally would be secured to provide the food while the German legions did the fighting. General Ludendorff, however, chose to ignore this suggestion, and instead he then undertook his ill-fated offensive which broke at Amiens.

"THE few divisions which we still had in the east would have sufficed to restore order in Moscow," declares the General. "In my view it would have been an easy matter to sweep away the Bolshevik Government." This may be a true estimate, but while capturing Moscow and setting up a puppet Tsar is one thing, we suspect the General would have found that getting the Russian peasant to produce for the German war was something else again. Even in those early days certain ideas of freedom had been liberated by the Russian upheaval, and the thin German legions would have found themselves compelled to fight for every bushel of grain, to fight indeed the same sort of elusive guerrilla warfare that broke Napoleon with his proud armies. Apparently General Hoffmann forgets that he lost the chance to secure Russia as a food-bearing ally when he threw his sword on the table at Brest-Litovsk. A decent peace with Russia at that time might have worked wonders for Germany, but it was not in the nature of the Kaiser's militarist diplomat to make a peace of this kind any more than it was in the nature

of the men who on a later day dictated the iniquity of Versailles.

EVIDENCE of a declining demand for many commodities suggests the query: Have the preachers of thrift been too successful? It is only a year or two ago that eminent bankers, stockbrokers, "financiers" and others assuming to know what is the matter with trade and industry, were asserting that what the country needed was more capital, which could only be procured through the practice of greater economy by the consumers. That this was a mistaken diagnosis was shown by the fact that during the year 1922, capital to the amount of more than \$850 million was loaned to foreign countries without perceptibly affecting the domestic supply, or reducing interest-rates on loans. Capital we have in abundance, as witness the eagerness to secure opportunities for its investment abroad. Mills and factories in most lines of industry have a productive capacity greatly in excess of the demand. Is it not possible that the injunctions to save have been too faithfully followed?

A MODEST paragraph in the real-estate columns of the New York newspapers recently recorded the lease by the Gerry estate of the lot at the north-east corner of Fifth Avenue and 58th Street to T. Coleman DuPont for a period of sixty-three years, at an annual ground rent of \$125,000. At the prevailing rate of interest, this means a valuation of this small lot of about two million dollars, a tidy sum even in these days of inflation and high prices. As the lot is part of the site for a huge hotel, the total of nearly eight million dollars in ground rent that will be paid its owners under the lease, will of necessity come out of the pockets of New Yorkers and of visitors who patronize the hotel. Mr. DuPont is investing millions of dollars in the construction of an imposing building, on which he will have to pay heavy taxes to the city out of the earnings on his capital. Some day the wise men who make our tax-laws may decide that the rate of taxation on unearned incomes should be considerably higher than on revenues derived from industry, commerce, or hotel-management—say about 100 cents in the dollar.

THE FRENCH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS has taken the part of the Negro against the genial Americans who insist on importing their race-prejudice into France. Foreign tourists are warned that insulting demands for the expulsion of Negroes from public places will be met with appropriate punishment; and this, of course, is very right and altogether proper. The other side of the story appears in the report that the action of the French Government was probably due to indignities visited by Americans upon Negro military cadets who were visiting Paris as guests of the Republic. According to another correspondent, it was an attack upon a Negro veteran of the war that led to the official demonstration. The French Government does well to encourage the Negroes in the maintenance of a certain personal dignity, but its special solicitude for the Negro soldier is in part attributable to a militarist policy which promises no good to black man or white.

The editors can not be responsible for manuscripts submitted; but if return postage be enclosed, they will do all in their power to see that rejected manuscripts are returned promptly.

It is not to be understood that articles signed with a name, pseudonym, or initials necessarily agree with the opinion of the editors, either in substance or style. They are printed because, in the editors' judgment, they are intrinsically worth reading.

Editors—Van Wyck Brooks, Harold Kellock, Suzanne La Follette, Francis Neilson, Albert Jay Nock and Geroid Tanquary Robinson. Published weekly by the Freeman Corporation, B. W. Huebsch, Gen'l Mgr., 116 West 13th Street, New York, N. Y. Subscription rates, per year postpaid: in the United States and Mexico, \$6.00; in Canada, \$6.50; elsewhere, \$7.00. London subscription representative, Dorothy Thurtle, 36 Temple Fortune Hill, N. W. 11. Copyright, 1923, by The Freeman Corporation, 22 August, 1923. Vol. VII. No. 180. Entered as second-class matter 12 March, 1920, at the post-office at New York, N. Y.; under the act of 3 March, 1879.

TOPICS OF THE TIME.

AT LAST—WHY NOT BEFORE?

At last, at a very long last, newspaper-correspondents are beginning to tell the truth about the situation in Europe, and to put the plain facts of it before the American reader. Mr. J. L. Garvin, quoted by the *New York World*, says, "Our slow people and the slow people of other countries do not realize that the armed supremacy of France is more unchecked and more absolute than in the days of Louis XIV and Napoleon, and that for a certain number of years to come we will have to live under it whether we like it or not." That is precisely the size of it. Mr. J. A. Spender writes to the *New York Evening Post* that "so far as it is aimed at bringing the French to a more moderate frame of mind, the British *démarche* has completely failed. Poincaré refuses to budge by one inch. . . . Opinion grows that what she [France] has ultimately in view is incorporation of the Ruhr with the heavy industries of France, German industrials being induced or coerced into working with the French under direction of the Comité des Forges. . . . The French have unchallengeable military power—no one is dreaming of applying force to this argument."

It strikes us that Mr. Garvin ought to think twice before he disparages people at large as "slow" to realize the truly fearful situation of affairs in Europe. Perhaps they are slow—no doubt they are—but does it quite lie in Mr. Garvin's mouth to say so? The slow people of the English-speaking world might very properly turn upon Mr. Garvin and tell him that they would perhaps not be so slow as they are if he and Mr. Spender and other moulders of public opinion had been a little more alive to their duty as publicists. This surely is a pretty time to be acknowledging a state of affairs that should have been obvious to any well-informed student of international relations for at least two years! This paper made an accurate forecast of it in January, 1922, at the time of the resignation of M. Aristide Briand, and has commented upon its unmistakable development ever since. Early in December, 1921, while publicists were still spewing sentiment over the preposterous Washington conference, we remarked:

M. Poincaré and his horde of extremists have their war-paint on and are after Aristide with their tomahawks. We think it is rather better than even money that they will shortly get him. . . . There may yet be a substratum of common sense left in the French people, sufficient to withstand launching the nation on a grand general course of imperialist and punitive military enterprises; we hope there is, but we are far from sure of it.

One month later, M. Briand resigned, and M. Poincaré took his place. We then gave an extremely cautious and moderate estimate of probable French policy under M. Poincaré, making full allowance for the possibility, as we put it, that "perhaps M. Poincaré may not obstruct the process of general reconciliation with anything more substantial than words"; but finally we remarked:

In saying all this, we can not be unaware that we are more or less whistling to keep up our courage. . . . Far more probable does it seem that France will speed up a bit on the way she has been going, and fresh from the exhilarating sport of conference-busting, will proceed to make the rattle of her sabre and the chugging of her submarines—if submarines chug, as we presume they must—heard around the world. . . . We saw this miserable business imminent as soon as M. Briand left Washington.

Concerning the second point raised with some circumspection by Mr. Spender, we have long been telling our readers that the German indemnity was a mere talking-point with M. Poincaré, and that his real object in occupying the Ruhr has all along been what Mr. Spender now intimates it may be.

We do not rehash all this for the sake of pluming ourselves on our own judgment or ostentatiously to show our readers that we keep faith with them. The first would be silly, and the second superfluous. We do it merely to exhibit the difference between writing for political purposes and writing for purposes of information. All well-informed publicists knew quite as much as we knew about these matters, and perhaps more. They knew M. Poincaré's record and affiliations, and his diplomatic manoeuvres that culminated in the war. They knew the historic French ambition after a military hegemony over the Continent; and they could perceive as clearly as we, how directly the negotiations at Versailles played into the hand held by that ambition. Yet ever since the Versailles conference, the paramount political fiction has been that of "the solidarity of the Entente"; and our eminent publicists, editors and correspondents on both sides of the Atlantic have sacrificed everything to the keeping-up of that fiction. History was against it, circumstances were against it, common sense and ordinary observation and inference were against it; and yet they kept it up.

We are publishing in this issue a communication from a friend in Paris which puts the situation quite as we think it is—quite as sinister, quite as hopeless. We can not share his faith in the French people or his hope that they will assert themselves. We do not distrust them because they are French, but because they are misled and misinformed. They are "slow" people, as Mr. Garvin might say; and they are slow for the same reason that the people in Mr. Garvin's country, and those in our country, are slow. Considering what the publicists, editors and correspondents have been doing for them all these years, how should they not be slow?

DRUGGING THE YOUNG IDEA.

THE latest no-more-war demonstration, staged a few weeks ago, fell rather flat, in this territory at least, and the mass of the people betrayed no particular interest. Probably most of them were too busy with their personal affairs, and certainly not a few were cynically-minded. Well-meaning clergymen who strove to give some constructive turn to the negative slogan by offering as panaceas the League of Nations, the World Court or other catchpenny political devices, seemed to throw an additional damper on the none too candescent occasion.

We would not deny that these sporadic emotional demonstrations of the pacifist brethren probably serve a transient purpose, like the old-fashioned revival-meetings; but we doubt that at best their influence is more than superficial, and obviously it fails to touch the deep sources of infection which produce wars. Probably a proportion of the good people who participate get salvation (as the phrase goes), but the war-makers and the covert system of imperialist rivalry and intrigue that leads to war, are wholly untouched. Nobody of any account takes the pledge, so to speak, and while perhaps here and there a vote-cadging politician gives the affair a momentary appraisal, he quickly perceives that it is nothing he need reckon with.

It has seemed to us that the pacifists would do well to devote less energy to stunts, and more to the

plodding work of education. Any idiot with a voice can break up a no-more-war parade by roaring forth some patriotic mendacity, such as: "These people are trying to hoist the white flag over the star-spangled banner." In the realm of reason, however, the pacifist can find arguments that make his position wellnigh impregnable; and if he would venture into analysis the world is all before him, where to choose.

As an admirable example of educational effort we would cite the little pamphlet entitled "War and Peace in United States History Textbooks," compiled by Isabel Kendig-Gill and published by the National Council for Prevention of War. The author has made an analysis of the principal textbooks on American history used in the school-system throughout the United States. Only four out of thirty-one books make any reference to the peace-movement. Of twenty-five texts examined with reference to the space devoted to war, it was found that battles, campaigns and conquests occupied one-fourth of the pages.

There is, the author of the pamphlet found, "an overwhelming tendency in the majority of the texts to glorify war and military achievement." The historical *entrepreneurs* delight in such terms as "fair field of battle," "valour," "bravery," "audacious courage," "magnificent drive," "our great adventure . . . crowned with success." There are more illustrations devoted to war than to any other subject, and they portray war-heroes in their glory,—and exhibit dramatic and heroic aspects of the business of mass-killing.

We took occasion recently to point out the inadequate and misleading manner in which several histories dealt with the causes of the recent European war. The school-histories under discussion are found generally to be superficial and evasive with regard to the causes of wars, and equally so with regard to their results. Apparently for the young idea it is held sufficient to portray a war as a sort of spontaneous heroic episode, rallying a people to ardent spiritual endeavour, and resulting, if fortune favour the brave, in well-earned material acquisitions. The routine mendacities, brutalities and thieveries involved find no place in the history books.

To take some examples: our boys and girls are taught that the war of 1812, with its unfortunate ending, shows that "the 'peace spirit' of Jefferson had been carried too far." In another volume they learn, however, that this was "of great good to us, for it made us feel we could take care of ourselves." Even that sordid land-grabbing raid, the Mexican war, becomes, under the historical lens, a splendid crusade. The Mexican campaign is "one of the most brilliant episodes in our military annals" and in it "Americans demonstrated their instinctive military talent."

In dealing with the late war, the historians who write our textbooks seem to indulge in a competition of banalities. "Nowhere," says the pamphlet, "is there any fundamental analysis either of the political and economic situation out of which the war grew, or of its spiritual and moral costs to the world. The peace-treaty is usually disposed of in a sentence and without criticism. The general impression one gains after reading these accounts is only of a brave and triumphant crusade against the Powers of Darkness, in which we bore an heroic part." Thus, one text describes those who fought on the other side as "the cruellest foe war ever let loose." According to another book the war is characterized as "the defence of an ideal against brute force," and the purpose of the Allies and Associates is represented as an attempt to

realize the vision of "a world without war and poverty, preventable disease, idle rulers, ill-paid workers, ignorance and hopeless toiling millions." Apparently our school-children leave the history-lesson with a vague idea that the overwhelming victory of the Allied armies has brought this happy consummation in Europe! Another naïve dealer in historical folk-lore asserts that "the principle of guilt and reparation for any nation starting an unprovoked war was established," and he adds for good measure that "terms offered to Germany provided the basis of a just and durable peace." While perusing this, we had before us on our desk a statement of the leader of the second political party of Great Britain, in which he said: "The biggest crop of these grievances which trouble Europe to-day comes from the treaty of Versailles. As long as that [the treaty] lasts, with all its vindictiveness and injustice, peace in Europe will be precarious." No intelligent person can question this summary of the situation. Judged by the facts, it is a gross understatement. Yet the easy gentlemen who write "history" for our children choose to cover the iniquities of the war and the peace with a sickening mess of eulogistic drivel.

We are not greatly concerned with discovering whether these writers of misinformation be merely ignorant, or intellectually dishonest. In either case they would have no place in an educational system designed to promote the general intelligence. It is to be noted that they are turning out the same sort of stuff with which the German Kaiser's educators drugged the youthful cannon-fodder, the familiar mendacities and illusions instilled into the public mind under political government everywhere. The pamphlet of the National Council for the Prevention of War, in exposing this historical buncombe, is a worthy educational venture, and it is to be hoped that the Council can place it in the hands of every school-teacher in the United States.

TIRED OF DEMOCRACY.

BELIEVERS in political democracy and parliamentary government are naturally somewhat shocked at the attempt of the Fascisti to give legal form and permanence to a dictatorship which in the beginning rested confessedly upon force, and might therefore be regarded simply as a temporary expedient. It is the boast of the Fascisti that they have all the ruthlessness of Machiavelli's "Prince," with none of the soft words prescribed by the old councillor of kings for the cloaking of reality; and yet the new electoral law, recently voted in the Italian Parliament by a majority of 335 to 139, is just such another piece of faking as the three-class system which Frederick William IV incorporated, by divine right, in the Prussian constitution of 1850. Whatever the Fascisti may say, they do not trust to force alone for the maintenance of the dictatorship; they are not sure that they can always employ the clubbing process with sufficient vigour to control their enemies' votes, or to exclude them from the polls; and they have therefore evolved the truly Machiavellian expedient of allowing the anti-Fascist majority to vote, and at the same time excluding them from any effective representation in the Government.

Under the provisions of the new law, the parties will make their nominations as before, and each of the electors will then drop in a bean for the national candidate-list of his party. The total number of votes cast for each of these lists will then be footed up, and the individual party which polls the largest number of

votes (it may be one of a dozen competing organizations, and its vote may amount to only one-tenth of all those cast)—this party will then receive, on the basis of its plurality, a solid block of two-thirds of the seats in the House of Representatives. It is nonsense to speak of the resultant assembly as a representative body, for the reason that the largest of the country's minority-groups will have an independent majority in the legislature, and will therefore be the only group that is in any proper sense represented.

The House has hitherto been made up of a considerable number of minority-groups, which should in theory have gotten along with the business of legislation by the method of trade and compromise. As a matter of fact, they have hardly managed to get along at all since the war; and it is argued in favour of the new system that it will enable the Parliament to act quickly and effectively, and thus actually to function as an organ of government. This argument loses some of its force, however, when we remember that it could have been employed even more appropriately in support of the despotic rule of the Visconti and the Sforza in the city-State of Milan, or the tyranny of the Bourbons in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, or any of the other abominations that Italy was supposed to have escaped from with the ousting of the Austrians, the unification of the Italian States, and the extension of the Sardinian constitution to the limits of the new kingdom. The Fascisti are right, of course, when they say that democracy will not work in a great centralized State; but does it follow of necessity that democracy must be sacrificed, in order that the State may survive? There is an alternate possibility which promises something better than a return to the tyranny of the past.

AN IRIDESCENT DREAM.

THE declarations of a committee of cockroaches called together for the ostensible purpose of abolishing vermin would not be taken very seriously by sensible persons. Similarly, the conclusions of the imperialist politicians on the Disarmament Commission of the League of Nations need not engage one's attention deeply. Lord Robert Cecil and his colleagues on the Commission have drawn up a plan to achieve disarmament by means of a system of "defensive" guarantees and alliances under the League. Under this scheme, individual Governments will receive a guarantee of security from the other Governments banded together in the League, and in addition they are empowered to make special "defensive" compacts with individual neighbours or groups of neighbours. In collaboration with these arrangements, each Government in the League is to sign a solemn scrap of paper pledging itself never, never, s'elp it, to commit "aggressive warfare" against any of the other high contracting parties. The gentlemen who concocted the plan profess to hope that under all these interlocking agreements and pledges the nations in the game will see fit to disarm, or at least to disarm a little. This part of the procedure is to be voluntary.

In general the scheme seems to be a happy one all around. As far as Lord Robert's Government is concerned, the compact contains no clause to enjoin a Great Power from gobbling up a backward, oil-bearing country on occasion; and as far as the French Government is concerned it would seem to give a sort of legal sanction to the Little Entente and other combinations which M. Poincaré has so assiduously been cultivating in Europe—all, of course, purely in the sacred cause of defence. If we were inclined to be captious,

we might suggest that the specific pledge against aggression was superfluous. None of the Great Powers in the League, as every schoolboy must know, ever started a war of aggression. In the late conflict they were inspired wholly with a zeal for defending culture, civilization and humanity, and they formally disavowed all claims to indemnity and loot of any sort. In fact, all wars waged by political Governments, from the time of the Grand Monarch to the Boer War when England rose so splendidly to the defence of her national honour against a brutal and unscrupulous foe, have been inspired by high moral purpose, and aggression has had no official countenance. The White Papers and the Pink, Green, Yellow and Magenta Papers, issued by Governments on such occasions, setting forth their conduct and purposes in official documents which, as a rule, are not much more largely mutilated or forged than the necessities of the case require, have made this fact plain to every student of history.

Possibly the plans of Lord Robert's Commission will in due course receive the approval of the Assembly and the Council of the League; or possibly, after the manner of such things, we may never hear of them again. In either case, we do not anticipate any general disbanding of armies and sinking of battleships in the immediate future; and a study of the proposed treaty makes it clear that the members of the Commission share our inexpectancy. One clause in the document states that in the event of an aggression of one of the signatory States against another, the injured party may complain to the Secretary-general of the League; the Secretary-general shall summon the Council; and if the Council decides after due deliberation that the case is one of aggression, it may call on all the signatories for help against the wicked assailant and even declare an economic blockade against him. This clause would seem to indicate that the politicians on the Commission have little faith in the signatories of their Governments; and we think they are wholly justified, for the word of most European Governments to-day is no better than their bonds.

A WEDGE FOR CHINA.

THE representatives of sixteen Powers including the United States, have presented to the Chinese Foreign Office at Peking their demands for indemnities and guarantees as a result of the incident on the Tientsin-Fukow railway last May, when upwards of a score of foreigners were captured by bandits and detained for a time in the hills. The demands include compensation for each foreigner captured, the dismissal of a number of officials, and the establishment of a police force under foreign officers for the protection of the railways. The money requested is not a large sum—it will run, apparently, to a few thousand dollars for each captive, with \$20,000 for an Englishman who was killed when the bandits boarded the train—but inasmuch as the Chinese treasury is a vacuum, collection would seem to be difficult. The demand for a police force under foreign auspices for the railways is more significant, for it seems a neat device to gain complete control of the arteries of communication. The diplomats re-enforce this demand with various threats. In China, they declare, "it has been proved to the world that foreigners do not enjoy the guarantees of safety to which they are entitled." The diplomatic body asserts its determination "to maintain by all measures in its power the defence of these rights and the application of those treaties confirmed at the establishment of the Republic."

As the diplomats well know, it is most unlikely that the acting Foreign Minister in China can return a satisfactory reply to their communication, for the Chinese Government which they recognize is reduced to a thing of shreds and patches, lacking a President, a Prime Minister and a parliamentary quorum. A rival Government at Canton contests its validity, and at least three independent regional leaders have assumed power in their considerable respective localities. China, in brief, is in precisely that condition of political transition that exercises an irresistible attraction for ambitious Western imperialists; and under the circumstances the developments from this preliminary diplomatic move may be highly interesting. Undoubtedly it is fortunate for China that at present the major Powers are pretty well tied up with their own struggle for supremacy in Europe. An additional factor in China's favour is the fact that the position of the new great Power, the United States, in the scheme of Occidental imperialism in the Far East, has not yet been thoroughly adjusted.

What the Great Powers undertake in China will be decided in accord with the interests of their various privilegees, balanced by the exigencies of the situation. The foreign colony in China has been calling for intervention in force. For the past few weeks considerable propaganda has been coming from Peking under diplomatic inspiration, and from London, setting forth that chaos and dissolution had fallen upon China and stressing the necessity for vigorous foreign assistance to enable China "to pull herself together," as our liberal friend, the *London Nation*, recently expressed it. The tenor of much of the material furnished to the faithful news-correspondents is reminiscent of the inspirations about Russia and Siberia provided by various Foreign Offices a few years back, shortly before the Allied Governments undertook their raids at Archangel and Vladivostok. Lord Curzon's office seems to be particularly active in the premises, as it was in the case of Russia before Mr. Trotzky's Red army had demonstrated that the time to divide Russia into spheres of influence had not arrived.

While it is true that political government in China is not in a flourishing condition, and that China, like most of the nations of Europe, is in default for certain foreign debts, it appears that trade prospers moderately, and the mass of the Chinese people pursue their affairs as in normal times. There has been no avalanche of paper money, such as has overwhelmed the nations of Europe, perhaps because paper stamped with a governmental promise has no meaning for the wise Chinese. The Government may be bankrupt, but China runs on a basis of hard cash, with the cost of living far below the dreams of the most frugal European. The total external debt is not much over half a billion dollars, and it is noteworthy that it was virtually all incurred as the result of foreign aggressions or intrigues, such as the Japanese war, the Boxer indemnities and the financial "aid" imposed on China when her Government was bamboozled into declaring war on Germany.

In observing events as they hereafter develop in China, it will be well to recall the terms of the treaties which the representatives of the Great Powers signed with the Chinese delegates at the Washington conference. These documents bound the Powers to respect the sovereignty, the independence and the territorial and administrative integrity of China; pledged them to give China an unhampered opportunity for self-development; promised equal opportunity for the commerce of each nation in China; and, finally, established

the rule that no Government might seek special rights or privileges in China to the detriment of the citizens of other Governments. A short time after this solemn scrap of paper had been signed, the leaders of the Japanese Government were drawing up plans for the seizure of various strategic points in Chinese territory in case Japan became involved in a war with Russia in Siberia! This would scarcely seem to accord with the spirit or letter of the treaties; and neither would the recent inspired publicity from British sources, calling for forcible intervention to make China safe for democracy.

China is a logical focus for the next international struggle, and it is a fair guess that it will be called on to play its rôle as soon as the Powers compose somewhat their differences over the disposition of the loot from the last conflict. With a Germany threatened with dissolution close at hand, they can scarcely be expected to give immediate attention to China. That plum can be swallowed at leisure. It seems to hang ripe and alluring in an unguarded orchard, yet we sometimes wonder if the Western diplomats may not underrate incalculable forces of resistance on the part of this ancient civilization, an absorbent resistance which will not yield to bayonets and bombing-planes, because it is not designed in terms of such things. In his "Indiscreet Chronicle of the Pacific," the Englishman who writes under the name of Putnam Weale gives a glimpse of what we mean.

The people [he declares] are unalterably opposed to exploitation by foreign capitalists; and even if really necessary work, such as the construction of trunk railways, were taken in hand, the popular instinct would soon rebel against an alien system. Without the willing co-operation of the people, the whole machinery of life stops in China as automatically as if levers had been pulled: the very bases of life seem to vanish overnight, because those underlying bases are purely and entirely Chinese. Within the past year the colony of Hong Kong has been taught this great truth in a humiliating and crushing way.

We commend these words of a foreign observer to the consideration of Lord Curzon and other Western imperialists when their romantic minds turn to the vision of new empires to be carved out of the East.

MISCELLANY.

JOSEPH PENNELL, glorious old war-horse, broke out in a recent issue of the *Times* at a rate that did my soul good to see. He is teaching the graphic arts for the Art Students' League, and in the *Times* he tells how he does it and what he is driving at. He is making craftsmen, not artists. According to his theory, it is the Lord's business to make artists, not his, and if the Lord wants to make an artist of any of his pupils, well and good! that is the Lord's affair; it is Mr. Pennell's business to make him a craftsman. Mr. Pennell puts in paragraphs about the characteristic American indifference to craftsmanship, that ought to be learned by heart by every "art-student" in the land before ever he be permitted to touch a brush or a pencil.

EVERY word that Mr. Pennell says about the graphic arts could be taken over bodily and applied to American studies in literary art, and it is high time that some nobly cantankerous old grouch like Joseph Pennell spoke his mind to equally good purpose about these studies. Charles Beard and I got on this subject one day, and for the fun of the thing we calculated roughly the number of "courses in English" that are being given annually in the colleges and universities of this country. They run

up to an appalling total of something like twenty thousand, I think; and how many of those who take them turn out to be anything like literary craftsmen, or get any competent idea of what literary craftsmanship is, let alone acquiring any respect for it or concern with it?

I MENTIONED this matter to one of the editors of the *Freeman*, and he said wearily, "I have often wondered what I would do if some one should come to me in my office some morning, and say, 'I am a first-class literary craftsman. Give me an idea, and I can give it the best possible literary expression. I can spell. I can punctuate, on the simple principle that punctuation is to help a reader to get the sense of a sentence. I can use the English subjunctive and the conditional sentence. I know the history of the language and the values of words, and I can differentiate among synonyms. Moreover, I have the craftsman's feeling for the language, I have his intense love for it, and this gives me a craftsman's resourcefulness and flexibility, so that my use of it is not a mechanic's use, but a craftsman's use.'"

"If such a thing happened to me," continued the editor, "I think I should faint. What is the use of attaching importance to the 'creative work' that is being done here in literature, when there is, in the first place, no body of critical opinion to give direction to creative work, and no craftsmanship to give it shape? Now, here," he said, taking a book from his desk, "is some 'creative work.' It is an anthology of poetry, done by some thirty persons. Look at it! God may have meant some of them to be artists—I don't know whether he did or not, and I have my doubts. But it is a certainty that none of them ever had a literary Pennell standing over him with the bull-whip to make him a first-class craftsman. Between you and me, there isn't a blessed one on the list whom I would trust to read ten lines of prose copy or correct one paragraph of galley-proof."

"For that matter," he went on, "I would not have trusted Count Tolstoy to do those things. Tolstoy could not spell, and proof-sheets were an enigma to him. But I never heard that he was proud of this or regarded it as anything but a disability. My complaint, like Mr. Pennell's, is of people who think craftsmanship is low, and of the schools that let them think so. I declare, I believe that American schools teach everything about the English language except what to do with it. At least, from the kind of thing I see, one would say that literary craftsmanship had gone out for good. When criticism brings it back and another generation of writers is imbued with the sense of it, we may have a prospect of some good literature. Until then, however, I for one am not holding my breath in expectation of any great things from 'creative activity.'"

JOURNEYMAN.

POETRY.

BLIND TIME.

Time, who begins and ends
Our faded masque of friends,
Who lifts our moments up
Within his bruised cup
And drains our living down,
Is but a sightless beggar of the town.

Down alleys and vague ways
He dogs our failing days.
His tapping cane behind
Stirs horror in the mind,
As each one straightway flies
The menace of his blind, unanxious eyes.

HERBERT S. GORMAN.

ENGLISH OF THE MELTING-POT.

IN the days before the war, in the era of the melting-pot, it seemed to me that our speech and our social order were not changed, but were rather in process of change. Many things, therefore, that we then despised as belonging to the new order, were not improbably symptoms of the death of the old. Though they were of the new and were worthy of all condemnation, what of the future? That was what I asked myself in those days. If there were vulgarity and carelessness and ambiguity and illiteracy in newspaper-English, might it not be because the people were only beginning to demand their own place in the culture which belongs to all, and which can be acquired and enjoyed by all only when the era of a leisure class and a working class shall have given way to an era of work for all and leisure for all? Social justice is the mother of wholesome culture. In so far as a people lack culture, we may be sure that it is because unearned leisure enervates and undeserved drudgery brutalizes.

A British editorial writer, in one of the issues of the *London Nation* during 1910, turned his attention to this drudgery. Alluding to the sacrifice of youthful lives in plutocratic factories and of youthful minds in industrial education on plutocratic plans, this writer ventured to warn us that we were "allowing these lads and girls between fifteen and eighteen, at the time of life when the mind is singularly plastic, with a zest for discovery and a generous passion for new impressions, to devote themselves almost exclusively to 'bread and butter' studies." He regarded this as "a deplorable and perverted aristocratic prejudice which misleads us." He continued: "We think of the liberal studies as the natural monopoly of the leisured and the well-to-do"; and "we fail to realize that precisely in proportion as his daily life must plunge a manual worker in the deadening monotony of the mill's routine, is he forced to seek far outside it the interests which can bring to his mind a human dignity and a contact with eternal things."

That writer thought "a just society would offer to the mill-hand the mental distractions which it squanders on the idle children of his landlord and his employer, not because he needs 'accomplishments' for his wage-earning, but because his mind must be bent without them to the inhuman service of the machines it tends." He branded as "only a mechanical pedagogue" one "who can think of the disinterested studies as something difficult and external and remote from the life that even the poorest worker leads"; for, to continue the quotation, "over his head, also, are the stars, and under his feet the rocks; he, too, can understand the movements of a bee, or the unfolding of a flower; it is not beyond him to learn enough of history to prefer the novel of Scott to the serial in his evening paper." Further developing his thought, this British writer declared that "the governing classes have reached that stage of enlightenment at which they understand that the wealth of nations demands industrial efficiency and bodily fitness in the worker, and of these they make the exclusive idol of the schools"; and that "they have not yet realized that the organized pursuit of wealth, which has destroyed the joy of craftsmanship and driven the worker from the soil, has imposed also on the national school the obligation of aiding the minds which pass through it to reach the exits from the cave."

In the ideas expressed in those quotations there seemed to lurk the secret of the new civilization and its corresponding English, as I then thought I saw them crudely and rudely beginning to develop. By releasing

the masses in their youth from the prison of industrial drudgery into which they were born—aye! but there was the problem—how to release them?

This problem was no longer a difficult one, in theory, to those of us who already realized the self-evident truth that drudging masses are necessarily correlative to leisure classes. It was difficult only to those who wished to release the working masses from undeserved drudgery without depriving the leisure classes of unearned luxury. To most of us this puzzle seemed impossible of solution; at any rate until some magician should show us how to eat another's cake and let him eat it too. Without the irrelevant factor, however, that factor of perpetuating luxury for some at the expense of the labour of others, the industrial problem seemed not only easy of solution, barring resistance by the privileged, but it seemed at that time to be in process of solution—not in economic theory, to be sure, for the economic cult of the period kept the waters of economic theory muddy, but in political practice.

Look at the politics of the time—in Great Britain, in Germany, in Australasia, in Scandinavian countries, even in Tsaristic Russia, in China, too, whose civilization we had learned to think of as obsolete—look towards those countries as they were then! If one had the eyes to read the signs of the time, one might well have been impressed with the thought, however vague, that the problem was solving itself—that all the tendencies were headed in the direction of “the square deal.” The day of the parasite seemed to be passing, the day of the worker to be dawning. One might have thought one saw the promising process also in operation in our own Republic had it not been that even as prophets are not without honour save in their own country, so the changing order was less visible at home than anywhere else. But verily a changing industrial order did then seem to involve nearly all the world.

Might not those yellow newspapers, at that time so conspicuous, and also the black, the blue, the grey, the red, and all the rest—in so far as they reflected the moods of the masses—might they not have been reflecting the socializing process of a class which the older order had oppressed and silenced? Might they not have been picturing forth the coming to social consciousness of disinherited millions whose oppression was the disease of which the older order was dying and whose taste for literary “screams” was born of the silence they had so long endured? I felt that we had better wait until the new order should have become mature enough to “sense” its responsibilities, and newspaper English had “glimpsed” its own higher levels of expression, before condemning yellow newspapers, or despising them, or otherwise indulging in undue self-exaltation regarding them or their constituencies. Lincoln's estimate of the people was profoundly true—of the people in the mass. Some of them can be fooled all the time, and all of them some of the time, but all of them can not be fooled all the time. Their thought may be frivolous often, but not always. So their inchoate English might have been crude, but they would not have let it continue so.

Looking upon newspaper-English as I did, I felt that it must be a growing English, and that in order to grow it must be a living speech and not a “pickled” one. I had read a story in one of the issues of *Harper's Weekly* for 1910, about a writer whose work found no market, but whose unconscious imitators prospered. “Why do they make money?” asks one of the characters in the story, “when he's so far from any worldly stunt?” “Because,” replies another, “they've translated him into the language the market understands.” The

latter character adds to his reply: “He's dug out the gold; they've minted it, they've put it into circulation.” And so I thought of the newspaper with its new-fangled English. It was the literary mint for people's English. The people dug out the gold; the newspaper minted it. Had its mintage fallen below their appreciation of literary form, though not below their own habits of speech, they might have held it in contempt; had it risen above them they might not have understood. The English of the newspaper of that period of journalism had to be the English of the street—in spirit, perhaps, more than in form—and the best English of the street. It was from such a germ that I thought newspaper-English was destined to grow.

Even in the germ, newspaper-English had a considerable range of excellence; all the way from the grade labelled “rot” in the technology of journalism, to high levels of literary strength and beauty. Its distinguishing characteristic on all levels was a tendency to reflect the changing thought and speech of a changing social order; its structure was the form which that tendency created in its own likeness. The art of it consisted in expressing in the style best adapted to the widest understanding of English-speaking communities, the thought of the people in the mass. To succeed, the writer or speaker of newspaper-English had to think with the people rather than for them or with only a few of them, and to express his thought in a speech which they recognized as their own but could not phrase as well.

With all its varieties, its crudities, its concealed beauties, its weakness, its strength, its mysteries and possibilities, the newspaper-English of the decade before the war must have been a speech in which the revolutionary spirit of that time was in process of finding literary expression. Apparently on the borders of a new industrial order, we were also apparently on the borders of an appropriate new English speech. The optimistic among us might have said that there was no revolution, but only language-phenomena of the kind that have always been, the continuous kind, the commonplace kind—phenomena, that is, of ceaseless action and reaction with a forward trend. I could not have denied it. Yet that perennial process did seem to be under the influence of an unusual force. It did seem to have a different movement from the regular swing. There seemed to be about it something less like continuous progress and more like a leap; something less like generation and more like creation. The analogue in Nature—was it not the use of an older type to create a type fit for the coming day? The analogue in history—was it not characterized in the quotation I have made from Green? The literary change hardly seemed like one from a Richardson to a Thackeray, or a Milton to a Tennyson. Though never so much lower in the scale of literary excellence thus far, its historical analogue seemed rather to be the adaptation by Wycliffe of the speech of the ploughman and the trader five hundred years before. Appearing to reflect the processes of a changing industrial order, yet reviving and fostering the best in classic English, newspaper-English impressed my imagination as going forward instead of backward, as growing upward instead of bending downward, as prophetic of an English of distinction and harmonious structure, strong, refined, subtle, beautiful; a sturdy English for a working people, a charming English for their intervals of play.

Then came the war. Dreams of evolutionary social progress were displaced by revolutionary and reaction-

any nightmares. Instead of going forward and growing upward, we seem to have pitched headlong into unquenchable fires of hell, where newspaper-English, with all its beneficent suggestiveness and culturable possibilities can have no refreshing function.

LOUIS F. POST.

(The End.)

"PARTIR—C'EST MOURIR UN PEU."

It is the eve of the fourteenth of July; the buses and street-cars are gay with the national colours, and workmen are busy placing on the bunting-covered stands, where to-night all Paris will descend to her pavements to dance, the letters R. F., symbolizing the République Française—a legend which as the *Canard Enchaîné* said yesterday with acid irony, could only be found by diligent search in the archives of the present regency. While a merciless sun wilts the paper lanterns, I read in *l'Ere Nouvelle* of "*l'esprit de réaction le plus obtus qu'il ait été donné d'enregistrer en France depuis la Révolution de 1789.*" With a sigh I turn to the mild phrases of Mr. Baldwin's now famous speech in the House of Commons, with its expressions of good will and its painfully obvious attempt not to wound the all too tender susceptibilities of a somewhat hysterical France. The words of the French poet come unexpectedly to mind, "*Partir—c'est mourir un peu.*"

There are, after all, the imponderables of emotion in political action as in all others; and too often I think, in our realistic and "objective" discussions of the forces at work on the minds of men, we forget the bias and drift with which these emotions wittingly or unwittingly endow us. For me there is a little sadness in this national holiday. If one has lived with a people for two years, come to speak their language, to share somewhat their common pleasures and joys, to play with their children and enjoy their art and music, all the hard-headedness in the world can not prevent one having a real affection for them, a liking and personal fondness by comparison with which the stilted phrases of friendship of the professional propagandists and politicians seem as evanescent as bubbles.

France is parting company with England, definitely and formally at long last; and I suppose by doing so she is likewise, implicitly if not explicitly, parting with us. Henceforth there will be two policies in Europe, the French and the Anglo-American. Henceforth—and this is what I care about—the old machinery of hate-manufacture, suspicion-stirring, and appeal to base motives will be enthusiastically set in motion by those who have a vested interest in having people cut each other's throats. The English common people already appear to dislike France with an intensity of feeling that always shocks me whenever I take a brief run over to London. For the moment the French common people have no particular hatred, not even for the Germans. But to-day the signal has been given for a renewal of the old dreary business, and Marianne will be again asked to rekindle the ancient grudge against John. It will not be Germany for the next few years; Germany is impotent and divided. It will be England. I have enough sentiment still to feel the loss, the "little death" of a friendship which common adventure and suffering, even if for an absurdity, created.

With this obeisance, so to speak, to the sentimental side of the question (a side very real to me now), do the present facts justify this fear? Will France and England definitely go those separate paths that lead finally to the common path of war? Must the old struggle for the hegemony of Europe be resumed, and

can no common method be found for dealing with the problems which, unsolved, will eat away the foundation of Continental civilization?

All historical precedent, if it teaches us anything at all, shows that precisely this will take place. There is little in the nature of man to give foundation to the pious hope that "it will never happen again." The economic system that gave rise to the last war, though shaken to its foundations everywhere east of the Rhine by the events of the last nine years, still functions in the old familiar way in England and France—and America. France of course has its party of opposition; but if it were a question of France's prestige in the world, would that party act any differently than, say, leaders of the Labour party in England would act (recall how only a few days ago they cheerfully voted enormous sums for an aerial fleet on the plea that if France continued her supremacy in the air, Great Britain was in danger!) if it were a question of saving the Empire? I confess to serious doubts, though it is chiefly this opposition-party in France that warrants any legitimate hope.

Let us consider the facts to-day as they are. With England taking another path, France, we are repeatedly told, will be isolated. Well, what of it? France has been practically isolated ever since she undertook the occupation of the Ruhr. Belgium is restive; Italy is restive; the United States is sceptical; even the Vatican, which the reactionary leaders in France have done so much to placate, has returned evil for good by being frankly hostile. But there is no serious sign that France contemplates withdrawal because of these disapprovals. France is in the Ruhr, is committed to the Ruhr politically. She must stay there until Germany satisfies her prestige by consenting to terms which no Berlin Government yet on view on the horizon would for a second contemplate consenting to. Certain French industrialists are being badly hit by the policy of the French Government in the Ruhr; there can be no doubt about that. Then let them withdraw from the Comité des Forges and howl at the Government all they want. Every day that French troops stay in the Ruhr adds to the political damage that would be done to France if they were withdrawn only on paper promises, and the elections are not until next spring!

Put the problem as one in mathematics. The French are in the Ruhr. Who is going to put them out? Russia can not do it. No nation on the Continent can do it. England, proud and mighty England, can not do it, even though she can exert enough pressure of one kind and another and appeal to world-opinion sufficiently to make French tenure there decidedly uncomfortable. Germany herself can not do it, nor the people in the Ruhr themselves, for the French can starve them out any time they wish. The United States certainly is not dreaming of any more European adventures, however strongly anti-French feeling may be running there at present. By elimination there is but one simple answer—only the French themselves can do it.

Now it seems to me that back home few understand one thing which is more or less taken for granted in Paris. That one thing is the fact of a German revolution. What form it will take or where it will come first are questions I leave to the expert in political prophecy; what I am stressing is the unspoken assumption here that it *will come*. The French militarists and reactionaries are not in the least perturbed by the prospects of this revolt; indeed some of them almost openly encourage it, for they see in German violence—in an end to this bewildering and maddening "passive resistance" which they do not understand—still another

opportunity to butter their own parsnips. England's last-minute angling for some kind of a policy of compromise may buoy the Germans up temporarily with false hopes; but an "international" committee of experts sitting in Berlin determining Germany's capacity to pay will not supersede French army-orders in Bochum nor give more real wealth to the German workman. Unless M. Poincaré is overthrown and a tender policy à l'Anglais substituted—and nobody in Paris in his right mind expects this to happen before the spring elections, when in all probability it will be too late—the German revolution may be delayed but hardly arrested.

Granted then, if only as a hypothesis, that some kind of important German upheaval of despair takes place before the present policy of the French Government is substantially changed, what is going to be the attitude of the French people towards it? Mind you, I say the people, the peasants and workmen, not the politicians or the generals. If the attitude be one of welcome, or at least sympathetic understanding, then one may find committees of French Communists themselves helping committees of German Communists in the technical problems of evacuation, prior to settling French and German differences on some sensible and decent economic basis. Far stranger *bouleversements* have actually occurred in French history.

But I doubt if it will come to that. With the first outbreak of serious violence in Germany the pressure of the world's opinion on France will become so great that M. Poincaré will probably promptly resign; and this time not in a mere pet but in earnest. A new Government will come in, a little more responsive to the wishes of the French people for peace and friendly relations; and a common policy with England towards Germany be framed by the French themselves; and we shall see our problem solved in the only way it can be solved.

Yet the struggle of the present group in power may be desperate, and the forces of common sense in France are still weak and disorganized. There can be no guarantee whatever that French policy will be changed until Communism is knocking at the gates of Paris. It is impossible to predict anything except that the next few months promise more excitement in this part of the world than has been seen since a certain hot summer back in 1914.

What I draw comfort from in all this is one thing—the French people. In the United States, even more than in England, I hardly think the disgust and disillusion of the every-day French citizen at the present Government's foreign and domestic policies is even realized. But this feeling exists; and I sometimes wonder where the newspaper-correspondents in Paris spend their time when they are not in certain favourite bar-rooms. The news that is cabled home from Paris gives a very inadequate picture of the state of French public opinion. A large section of the citizenry here are "fed up"; just how large a section future events will determine to the satisfaction of all the world. All one can say now is that that section of French opinion hardly draws its sustenance from the official announcements of the American Legion or the American Women's Club in Paris. I only hope it realizes that America does not support M. Poincaré to the last man and the last dollar, as the French press hints. Probably it does realize it. Newspapers the world over recently, I observe, say one thing. When the people get a chance to express themselves, either through the ballot or otherwise, they say something else.

E. S. H.

MRS. HARTIGAN AND THE "TITANIC."

ACCORDING to Mrs. Hartigan, it was "the 'Titanic' began it all." Mrs. Hartigan is the lady to whose ministrations my disorderly bachelor apartment is indebted for what "service" it receives. Her own understanding of the term is elastic and a little erratic, but he would be a braver man than I have ever been who attempted to impose bounds on it. It appears to include the disappearance of sundry shirts and socks on Saturday and their reappearance, darned, washed and re-buttoned the following week, not to mention cakes of fresh soap and plump tubes of tooth-paste where harsh alkaline shreds and coils of twisted lead foil had been before. "Men is forgetful," comments Mrs. Hartigan. Her hand is feeble, her foot slow, but her back is still straight as a ramrod, her black hair only streaked with grey, and her blue eye untamed and piercing. I can imagine a day when her love was stronger than death, her hatreds deeper than the grave.

No Irish like her are born into the world to-day. She has seen the king of the fairies himself, the time she swooned with the pain was in her hand, dancing in rage round the stone stood up in the rath so fast he looked like a red streak. She has heard the "gentry" skirling and singing under the moon inside Sir Humfray Daly's lodges—the night the young lad was drowned in New Zealand or them parts. Like many of the older Irish in America, her sense of transition between the old world and the new is rather misty. She will tell, with an equal sense of ransacking a remote and colourful past, how the —th Regiment marched down the Avenue to the war in Virginia that stole the chasuble off their chaplain's back. She belongs to the older exodus, when the emigration was made "*en famille*" and the exiles were spared the sharpest pang of all, which is separation from the beloved. Such, at any rate, is Mrs. Hartigan, who believes the trouble started with the "Titanic." When I tell her she must mean the "Lusitania," she shakes her head and intimates, but without discourtesy, that she knows whereof she is speaking. It was the "Titanic," she insists, that "broke the luck of the English."

I sometimes wonder whether, in her transcendental Celtic twilight, Mrs. Hartigan has not groped upon a truth hidden from the practical mind. When one thinks back a little, one is struck with the comparative immunity from tragedy of the English race. Kipling is fond of telling us that "if blood be the price of admiralty" the English have paid in full. But they have really not paid for their abounding success in anything like the same measure that other races have paid for ambitions that came to naught. There is as yet no British Varus or Crassus. History records no British "Invincible Armada." No colonial venture of hers has ended as tragically as Adowa. There have been regrettable incidents, disastrous battles—Maiwand, Majuba, the Kabul retreat. But, somehow or other, the sense of fighting against great odds, the heroism that casts a halo over defeat, has always been at hand to spare the race the shadow of national humiliation and shame, the Caudine Forks through which other peoples have had to pass. Even in the natural order a sentiment has arisen, which I would not call altogether fanciful, that great disasters avoid territory over which the Union Jack flies. I remember the comment of a despondent French acquaintance when the top of Mont Pélée blew off, erasing St. Pierre with its ten thousand inhabitants from the face of the earth. "*Ces choses-là n'arrivent jamais à vous autres.*" On the seismological face of things there was no good reason why the catastrophe should not have had Barbados or St. Kitts for its theatre. But "these things don't happen to you." The luck of the English!

¹ Leinster name for the fairies.

If the "Titanic" really broke the spell, it broke it in a way that hurt. There was heroism aplenty in the dark moments that followed the crash on the iceberg. In its supreme trial the race showed true to form. Yet the story shows no signs of becoming a national tradition side by side with the deathless epic of the Birkenhead. I wonder why. Is its memory felt to be, on the whole, rather disquieting than heartening? Is there something in the rush of the doomed liner, at record-breaking speed, with feasting and merriment under decks, through ice-infested seas, that is "un-English," that rings false to the tradition of competence, common sense and foresight on which the Empire has been built? Is it too distressingly like other disasters, suffered by other and "lesser breeds without the law"? Does it, for the first time, seem to range the Englishman, stolid, phlegmatic, apart, with races that admit the vertiginous attraction of fatality?

Two years later, in the last days of July, 1914, when all Europe was racing through the night to destruction, there were, perhaps, a few hours during which the fate of the world lay in the hands of a British Foreign Minister, and when the word that a Canning or a Palmerston would have spoken on instinct, might have spared civilization the blackest and most irremediable chapters in its history. To fancy that the word might have been uttered if, at a certain moment more than two years previously, a steersman, under orders from the bridge, had swung the wheel of the "Titanic" to port or starboard, is a conception too fanciful for utterance. To propose Captain Smith and Sir Edward Grey as two links in a chain of causation is a feat from which the most bigoted disciple of Hegel would recoil. Yet never is the conviction that I am standing in the presence of imponderables so strong upon me as when an ancient Irish lady, who has seen and heard the fairies, tells me that "it was the 'Titanic' began it all."

HENRY LONGAN STUART.

ANOTHER GATEWAY TO PANAMA.

WHEN I went to Santo Domingo last May because I wanted a glimpse of Latin-America and the tropics, I was not particularly interested in the politics and diplomacy of the American military occupation of the island. But during a month of travel in Cuba and the Dominican Republic I heard so many condemnations and defences of American interference in both countries that in spite of myself I began to weigh the pros and cons of the case. When I returned to the United States I found that I had several pounds of pamphlets and articles that had been eagerly thrust into my hands to help me make up my mind regarding the merits or demerits of our case in the Greater Antilles, especially in Santo Domingo and Haiti. By this time, an amateur interest in the question had been aroused, and I read all this literature with a moderate appetite for fact that was unsatisfied as I tossed the last pamphlet into a desk drawer and asked myself again: What is it all about?

I had made myself familiar with the usual defence of our invasion of the sovereign State, La Republica Dominicana, and with many condemnations of it that were rather better written and more closely reasoned. In the metaphysics of international law the case for the United States was soon torn to shreds by the Dominican plaintiffs, and when the Americans pretended to be getting down to brass tacks I was never quite satisfied that they had done so. When I read the following paragraphs in a pamphlet prepared by the American Military Government they seemed straightforward enough but left me still with a suspicion that there was a nigger in the wood pile:

The purpose of the United States in installing its temporary Government was to free the country from debt, to establish the finances upon a sound and enduring basis, to spread

education, both literary and vocational, throughout the country, to provide communications and other modern facilities, together with improved harbour-facilities, and while leaving the Dominican Judiciary intact, to improve the laws and economic condition of the country.

The Government is acting under the prescriptions of a Convention between the United States and the Republic of Santo Domingo of 1907, providing for the assistance of the United States in the collection and application of the Customs Revenues of the Dominican Republic. . . .

One clause of the above-mentioned agreement, which was ratified by the Presidents and Senates of the two Republics, Article III, provided that 'until the Dominican Republic has paid the whole amount of the bonds of its debt, its public debt shall not be increased except by previous agreement between the Dominican Government and the United States.'

Owing to the failure of the existing Dominican Government, or the impossibility of complying with it because of the intermittent revolutions occurring, as well as the menace of unsettled conditions to foreigners and to the Dominican people themselves, the United States Government found it necessary to direct its naval authorities to assume charge and restore tranquillity, and carry out the provisions of the Convention above cited.

The Dominicans made the case as stated here seem imperfect under international law by asking why there had been no arbitration of the alleged breach of the Convention through the friendly offices of a third Power. The Dominicans might, indeed, observe that the unsound financial condition of Italy since the war, and the intermittent revolutions there which have been a menace to foreigners and the Italians themselves have not made it necessary for the United States to assume charge and restore tranquillity in Italy. In doing so, however, they would be forgetting for the moment certain geographical factors in the situation, which neither they nor anyone else apparently has taken notice of. These geographical factors constitute the nigger in the wood pile, of whose presence I was aware only through psychic powers, until Mr. Robert T. Hill of the U. S. Geological Survey pulled him out for me the other day as I was idly studying the geography of the Caribbean in his book on the West Indies. Let me quote a paragraph from it that is unintentionally the most honest and dignified defence of American intervention in Santo Domingo and Haiti that I have read:

The American Mediterranean [*sic*] finds a number of outlets across the submerged bridge separating its abysses from those of the Atlantic. Shipping may glide eastward out of the Caribbean into the Atlantic between any of the Windward Islands, but to go northward toward the United States it must beat through one of four widely separated gateways which are of great strategic importance. These are the Anagada, Mona, and Windward Passages and the Yucatan Channel. The Anagada Passage is the most eastern, threading its way between the region where the eastern Virgin Islands of the Antillean Group meet those of the Windward Chain. . . . The Mona Passage separates the island of Porto Rico from that of Santo Domingo, and, being out of the line of travel, is less frequented than the others. The Windward Passage, between Santo Domingo and Cuba . . . is the most used commercially of all the passages and of greatest strategic importance. The Yucatan Channel separates Cuba from the Central American mainland, and, except the Strait of Florida, is the only entrance into the Gulf of Mexico.

This stark enumeration of the nearest portals of the Caribbean to the United States had an eloquence for me that outdid all the familiar vindications of our occupation of Santo Domingo and Haiti, and made the Dominican invocations of international law and morality seem rather academic or sentimental. The military invasion of Haiti, then, secured the Mole St. Nicholas, dominating the Windward Passage; the occupation of Santo Domingo, the Bay of Samana, dominating the Mona. These positions,

with the control of Porto Rico and Cuba and the ownership of the Virgin Islands, gave the United States all the northern gateways of the Caribbean on the direct line of communications with the Panama Canal, excepting only the western shore of the Yucatan Channel.

Samana Bay, on the Dominican side of the Mona Passage, according to Mr. Hill, is "to Santo Domingo what the Mole St. Nicholas is to Haiti. From every point of view it is one of the most advantageous possessions in the Antilles. It is thirty miles long, ten miles wide, and capable of accommodating the largest fleets, and ships of the greatest draft." This statement and its inferences set me to looking up "Samana" in the indices of a small library of works on Santo Domingo which I had been collecting since my return from the Dominican Republic. The references were all highly commendatory.

An English consul to Santo Domingo had written of Samana:

Its spacious bays and anchoring-places offer a shelter to the navies of the world, and its creeks afford facilities for the erection of arsenals and docks . . . still its chief importance does not consist in these advantages . . . but in its geographical position, forming as it does, one of the principal keys to the Isthmus of Central America and the adjacent Gulf of Mexico.

A French observer had seen this bay as the *tête du pont* of the highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific:

Samana is one of those maritime positions not often met with in a survey of the map of the world. Samana is to the Gulf of Mexico what Mayotta is to the Indian Ocean. It is not only the military it is the commercial key to the Gulf.

I discovered that Samana Bay was President Grant's trump card when in 1870 he was urging the annexation of Santo Domingo to the United States. His negotiations for annexation had grown out of a second attempt of the United States to lease the Peninsula of Samana. (The first, in 1855, had been checked by French and English diplomacy.) The Commission of Inquiry which Grant had sent to Santo Domingo during negotiations had rendered six special reports on Samana Bay and its region. One of these, "On Defences of Samana" by General F. Sigel, stated that:

The bay of Samana is the nearest great and safe harbour in the West Indies which can be easily reached by the open sea from the north-eastern coast of the United States. . . . As the harbour of the Mole St. Nicholas on the north-western coast of Haiti commands the Windward Passage, so the bay of Samana commands the Mona Passage, which leads from the Atlantic Ocean (Europe and the eastern shore of the United States) to the Isthmus of Panama. . . . Since the Island of Haiti or Santo Domingo forms the centre of all the islands extending from Key West to Trinidad, our naval forces could strike on the shortest line from Samana against any of those islands.

That this strategic position had been considered the principal gain that the United States might make by annexing Santo Domingo, in 1870, is indicated in this threat of President Grant's to the strong opposition he was meeting in the Senate:

If we abandon the project [annexation], I now firmly believe that a free port will be negotiated for by European nations in the bay of Samana. I have information which I believe to be reliable that a European power stands ready now to offer \$2,000,000 for the possession of Samana Bay alone, if refused by us.

It was nearly a half-century later, when the European Powers were mortally preoccupied with the international problems of their own hemisphere, that we had an opportunity again to reach out for this coveted naval base that

the political squabbles of Grant's Administration had forfeited. In 1916, when we ourselves were on the ragged edge of war, Samana Bay and the Mole St. Nicholas were more than ever to be desired by the State Department of the United States of America. Was it possible that the familiar defences of the military occupation of Haiti and Santo Domingo were disingenuous or at least self-deceived?

This brought the question down to considerations with which only a psycho-analyst could deal. What could the layman make of certain sentences in the State Papers of the Great Colonel who had brought to a head the diplomacy of seventy-five years:

We do not propose to take any part of Santo Domingo, or exercise any other control over the island save what is necessary to its financial rehabilitation in connexion with the collection of revenue. . . .

The chief material advantage that will come from the action proposed to be taken will be to Santo Domingo itself and to Santo Domingo's creditors.

When the Great Colonel was making the plea for the Convention of 1907 with Santo Domingo from which these words are taken, had he never heard of the strategic value of Samana Bay, grown to such great proportions now that the Inter-oceanic Canal was finally under construction? Or was he able to keep in separate compartments of his mind the financial condition of the Dominican Republic and its geographical position in the Caribbean? Who is competent to answer these questions now that the great personality about whom they are proposed has vanished?

But how the shade of the Great Colonel haunted these portals of the American Mediterranean *en route* to his Inter-oceanic Canal! On the dusty slopes of San Juan Hill in Cuba I had seen the ghost of young Roosevelt, the Rough Rider, re-enacting his first appearance in our imperial drama. Under that great ceiba tree beneath the blockhouse of San Juan where the Spaniards surrendered I had seen his future responsibilities heaped higher than the swords and guns of the defeated enemy: Cuba, Porto Rico, the Philippines, with an island of the Ladrões thrown in for good measure. The 15,000 mile voyage of the "Oregon" around Cape Horn had just dramatized our dire need of an Isthmian canal, and San Juan had given us a foothold on the four northern gateways to this long projected highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Before the death of this vigorous young cavalryman with the eyeglasses, the momentum that this small battle had given his career and our imperialist fate was enough to carry us through to domination of a completed Inter-oceanic Canal and the Antillean portals leading to it. It was a splendid epic coming here to its last lines in the military occupation of Haiti and Santo Domingo. Why botch it with unbecoming obeisances to international law and ethics? Why not be as honest about the whole matter as any map of the Caribbean?

TOWNSEND HILLS, JUN.

THE PROPHET.

His shaggy iron-grey beard falls in tufts upon his bare chest. A big nose of Mongolian mould towers above the hollow cheeks. Over bushy eyebrows rises the magnificent sweep of his forehead, which merges into the dome of the bald skull. The eyes, however, are the most eloquent feature of this striking face. There is a glint in them, a persistent feverish gaze, an intensity almost beyond endurance.

Strange—the man seems gay. There is the reflection of a triumphant smile on his lips underneath his moustache. There is a precipitance in the floating of his hair.

He seems in a wild, glorious rush. He is the prophet.

In former years he was the "reader" of the village. Belonging, as he did, to the Old Creed, he was better versed in the Fathers and in the history of the Church than were the learned ministers. His open disputes with the Provost of the official church, held at the market-place of the nearest town, were a source of delight to his followers. Nobody could beat Arsén in quoting church-authorities or dates. Even the special missionary, sent by the Bishop to put Arsén to shame, had been ignominiously defeated, after which event the authorities put a ban upon religious disputes.

The revolution found in Arsén an enthusiastic supporter. He became the leader of his community. His was the initiative for the expropriation of the Count's estate even before October, 1917. In the days of Denikin, he was the head of a secret peasant band, attacking the General's line. With the retreat of Denikin's army, he became a figure in the District Soviet. His belief in the revolution was of a religious nature. He saw the Kingdom of Heaven approaching on earth. Brotherhood and Love were to reign supreme.

Then came hard times. There was more war and bloodshed. One of Arsén's sons was killed in the retreat of the Red army before the Poles. Another lost a leg. Arsén's horse died. It became difficult for him to work his field. Crops were growing poorer, too. Government requisitions took away the major part of his labour's fruit. A gloom spread over the country.

Later came the locusts and destroyed most of the village vegetation. Arsén disappeared. It was rumoured that he had gone on a pilgrimage to a holy place. There was also talk of Arsén's roaming the Great Woods to the north. He was absent all through the summer. With the cold weather he returned. His clothes were torn; his shirt was open at the throat; his hair had grown wild. He was soon recognized by the village as "obsessed," though he spoke to no one. The light of his eyes sent a shudder through those who looked upon him.

He lived in his unheated house with his wife and crippled son. He worked silently and silently ate his poor meals. The usual reading of the Bible on Sundays was not resumed. The village accepted his "obsession" as it accepts every strange and disquieting event.

When next the Commissar, the county official, came to the Soviet house for a conference with the local Soviet, Arsén made his appearance. He had that gay, precipitous look which suggested both mockery and pain. He began to preach. He spoke of the revolutionaries who betrayed the holy revolution. He spoke of the iniquities of leaders who prophesy falsely. He spoke of the Red Flame that was about to consume all the rulers so that the heart of God's people might blossom upon their native soil.

He was driven out of the assembly room, but with every new session of the Soviet he came again and poured forth the stream of his visions. He was locked up for a few weeks and released on the ground of "irresponsibility due to a weak mind." Somebody in the village dubbed him "the prophet," and the name stuck.

On the day of my visit to the Soviet house, while I was interviewing the local authorities, Arsén appeared. My interlocutors were visibly displeased. "Go home, Arsén," the President said. Arsén waved his hand, tossed his shaggy head, strained his scrawny neck, and began in a monotonous recitative, piercing me with his intolerable eyes:

"Be silent, thou breed of the Devil, oppressor of my holy people. And thou, stranger, who may also be of the Devil's breed and of the race of the white-handed, hearken to me. A day will come, and the tongues of flame will issue from the depths, and the red birds will spread their

sparkling wings, like the storm that combs the earth in its mighty flight. The mute earth will begin to speak on the day of wrath; the woods will tremble, the cliffs will crumble and fall, and a mighty horde will arise. Woe to the strong, for they will be consumed by the red flames. Woe to the rulers, for they will pay in shame and humiliation the price of their misdeeds. Put your ear to the ground and ye shall hear the voices of God. Harken to the wind that shakes the structures to their very foundations."

Long after Arsén had finished his tirade, there was silence in the room. A mystic hand seemed to have extinguished every sound. Only the autumn wind howled around the house. A gloomy day was heavy with portents.

MOISSAYE J. OLGIN.

THE THEATRE.

THE SWEDISH BALLET.

THE SWEDISH BALLET can in no way compete with the Russian Ballet in virtuosity. It has not that experience of training or tradition which serves as ballast for the Russian organization. That the Swedish Ballet gains a certain freshness and enthusiasm from this youthful quality is not to be denied; but the enthusiasm of mere inexperience is usually to be distrusted. The Swedish Ballet suffers, too, from the star-system: Jean Borlin, for instance, is always featured in the principal male rôle, regardless of his suitability to the part. Another member of the company, Kaj Smith, is in many respects a more brilliant and certainly a more varied dancer. Borlin's dance-steps are almost entirely restricted to certain attitudes and turns which he employs indefatigably in ballets of the most diverse character. As the choreographer, however, for all the ballets of the organization, he is imaginative and sophisticated, commanding a wide range of intellectual, emotional, and æsthetic appeal; and in this capacity he deserves the prominence that he holds with less justification as a dancer.

In spite of certain handicaps noted above, the Swedish Ballet is an important manifestation of the development of modern ballet-work. The association of the group with ardent and gifted French modernists in literature, painting, and music has given it a vital rôle in the presentation of new and advanced conceptions to an increasingly wide public. The original and forceful ideas of Jean Cocteau, the dynamic modernism of painters like Léger, the music of the Groupe des Six, owe much of their current interest to the spirit of innovation and experimentation that dominates the Swedish Ballet.

Among the most important creations of the Ballet is the externalization of Canudo's poem, "Skating Rink," with the settings and costumes of Léger; the compelling rhythms of Honegger, one of the Groupe des Six; and a sophisticated choreography invented by Borlin. The "Skating Rink," realized against an opaquely coloured background of scattered limbs, faces, and mechanical fragments, of disjointed planes and segments, conceived by Léger; with its ugly, banal couples turning in perpetual and repetitional circles, chained to an amusement without joy, executing inevitably the paces of an empty game, symbolizes the macabre evolutions of the machine-crushed elements in a modern city. Into this terrible rhythm breaks the madman, the poet, the personification of the free ideal of woman. One of the female dancers detaches herself from the crowd and is swept with him into a dance

of hysterical sensuality. In vain a man in the throng seeks vengeance against the interloper. The other women would follow her example if they could. The crowd circles, feverish and fascinated, around the perfect couple. When the violence of this terrible love-dance is over, the woman falls exhausted and is carried out on the shoulder of the madman-poet, a sacrifice to the dream of beauty and love. The couples begin again the dull, dreadful and eternal round. Technically the ballet presents an interesting development of plastic possibilities involved in the evolutions of skating. Atmospherically it is a remarkable representation of certain modern mechanical and joyless attempts at diversion.

At the opposite pole in every respect is the recent production of a piece as delicate as a perfumed bon-bon. "Marchand d'Oiseaux" has for plot a naïve and slight tale almost like an infantile charade, a pretty exposition of a child's facile faith in the triumph of humility over pride. The French painter, Hélène Perdriat, invented the action and designed the settings and costumes. Germaine Tailleferre, the single woman member of the Groupe des Six, composed the music. The choreography is, of course, Borlin's. The setting is a delightful arrangement of sky and lake, luxurious trees and exotic plants, with a tiny, deep-windowed house in the centre of the back. From this house emerge two sisters. The elder, conceited and haughty, is billowed and flounced and pantaletted in flame-colour and black, and carries a gorgeous plumed fan for impressive gestures of disdain. The younger sister is her antithesis; clad in white, with little scalloped touches of orange; she suggests sweet simplicity and maidenly modesty in every ruffle and attitude. Two bouquets left at their door give opportunity for a display of tastes; the elder choosing the more pretentious and the younger the flowers of the field. A group of modest little communicants in frilly white with great blue sashes, on their way to church, are pursued onto the stage and mocked and drawn into a hilarious circle by a gang of mischievous schoolgirls, clothed in impertinent, short, checkered satin dresses of black and white, and white and rose. Three women gardeners in gay wide dresses of cerise and red, with flat yellow hats and green garden-implements, storm into the dance, and are followed by the Marchand d'Oiseaux, a slim figure in lemon-yellow velvet with wide flat hat, soft wide sleeves, bearing across his two shoulders a long pole on the ends of which hang high gold cages filled with birds. His advances to the proud sister are scorned, but the gentle younger one smiles upon him. The pride of the elder is righteously punished. For a stranger, richly clad in silver and white satin, approaches and is in the very process of being enthusiastically received by her, when a mischievous schoolgirl unmasks him as an old black merchant; and the proud beauty is discountenanced. The finale is a rejoicing of happy virtue rewarded. During the dance, the pole with the bird cages is hung jauntily over the door of the little house, to be taken down and presented in a prettily composed tableau at the end. Mlle. Tailleferre's music is delicately adapted to the text, and charms by an assemblage of pleasing and distinct styles almost in the manner of a medley. The dancing is largely composed of classical steps with some amusing fantasies in the gambols of the schoolgirls and several pleasing pictorial groupings. The whole is an exquisitely refined realization of a pretty passing notion.

Of all the creations of the Swedish Ballet the most directly emotional in its appeal is "L'Homme et son Désir," a joint conception formulated during a sojourn

of three artists in the Brazilian forest. The text is by the French poet, Paul Claudel; the *décors* by Madame Andrey Parr; and the music by Darius Milhaud, the member of the Groupe des Six best-known in America. The choreography of M. Borlin was subsequently conceived, but is none the less a brilliant parallel to the other elements; and Borlin's restricted, static, and attitudinal method of dancing is most successful here. Milhaud's music combines a large use of percussion and wind instruments with choral and solo-voice arrangements, intensely expressive of the physical, emotional, and atmospheric elements involved in the presentation. The stage presents four horizontal levels, in green with designs in crimson, blue, and black, rising one above the other and occupying the stage-space like a page in a gigantic book. On the sides, against the draperies which mask the entrances, are pasteboard figures in black and white. At the top, against depths of black, there is a semicircle of unfathomable blue, and in front of these colours, across the highest platform, slowly, almost imperceptibly, parade the hours; those of the night in black with golden cowls, those of the day in white capped with flame. On the step just below the hours and crossing the stage in the opposite direction, glides the moon, a figure in mauve carrying a flaming disk, bending low with it, then elevating it overhead, while her shadow, a figure in purple-black, slowly dances attendance, crossing before and falling behind her with the movements of the disk. Far below, on the lowest step of all, appear the counterparts of both moon and shadow as reflections in the waters of the primeval forest, moving with identical progress in a reverse direction across the stage. Between moon and water, between the real and the illusion, on the middle platform, the drama is enacted. Its central background is a diamond-shaped spot of black silhouetted against an oblong of brilliant blue; crimson-flowered designs rising against the fundamental green at the sides. On this step enters Man, led by two figures veiled and identical—one Memory, the other Illusion. They allure him equally, in slow, faltering circles; then they are gone, and Man sleeps, standing in the centre with arms extended. Before him come to dance the sounds of the tropical night and the eternal forest: tiny bells, golden strings, pipes of Pan, and clashing cymbals, garbed in green and rose and gold and black. As the music and the dancing rise to a frenzy, Man begins to respond and to dance himself. It is the eternal dance of desire, the nostalgic plaint of all who are exiled or abandoned or in restless torment. While the night is at its blackest, just before the white hours of dawn come creeping in above, one of the veiled figures returns to Man and turns trance-like about him. Holding the end of her veil, he turns about with equal slowness till he is swathed in its folds; then, connected by the last strand of the stuff of dreams, they move gently away together. Is it Memory or Illusion? The moon and her reflection are disappearing together. The black hours are passing out of sight, and the white hours have begun their slow advance. The music ceases in a retarded beat of muffled cymbals. The emotional unity of action, choreography, music, and *décors* in this plastic poem; the high standard of execution attained in it by the modified orchestra, the voices, and the dancers of the company; and the innovations in the structure of the setting, make it in many respects the most interesting contribution of the Swedish Ballet.

Most thoroughly delightful of all the lighter numbers of the repertoire is "Les Vierges Folles," danced and mimed to a score evolved from Swedish folk-

tunes by Kurt Atterburg; with set and costumes by Einar Nerman in imitation of the naïve Swedish Biblical art. It is a fanciful and humorously concrete presentation of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. The set consists merely of a grey drop, in the centre of which is painted a quaint church-façade broken by a doorway hung with black curtains. The virgins are all dressed in bobbing, bouncing hoopskirted dresses with little tight basques, and high, black, stovepipe hats; the wise ones in green and the foolish ones in orange; each carrying her lamp in hand. The bride's dream of the groom, while the virgins sleep with drooping heads like wilted flowers; the difficult waking of the virgins; the discovery that the frivolous ones are out of oil, and their pleas for the loan of a few drops from their righteous and unyielding sisters; the inimitable bridal parade led by the proud fiddler; and the exclusion of the poor foolish virgins by two yellow angels with swords of yellow flame that look like sticks of candy—the whole action of the piece is presented with deliciously and delicately nonsensical steps to the most charming and danceable of tunes. The ballet is particularly notable as revealing a comic gift of Borlin's of which we are nowhere else allowed a glimpse.

One of the most discussed innovations of the Swedish Ballet is the fantastic farce of Jean Cocteau called "*Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel*." In an imaginatively amusing setting which represents one of the platforms of the Eiffel Tower as conceived by the modern French painter, Irene Lagut, the personages, in magnificently grotesque costumes and masks designed by Jean Hugo, enact a mad satire upon the bourgeois celebration of such occasions. The greatest comic effect is attained in the burlesque of photographing the wedding-group. Throughout the piece the lines are delivered through the horns of phonographs at the two sides of the scene; and the different stages of the action, such as a wedding-march, after-dinner speeches, a dance of telegraph dispatches, and a funeral march, are accompanied by highly humorous and varied music, the composition of different members of the *Groupe des Six*—Auric, Milhaud, Poulenc, Honegger, and Tailleferre. In its original treatment of material, and in its use of masks, "*Les Mariés*" marks an important step in modern production.

The repertoire of the Swedish Ballet has several less important and some negligible numbers; one, indeed, "*Offerlunden*," is unbelievably bad. But turning from these lapses of the Swedish Ballet to its valuable and often brilliant contributions to modern theatrical art, it is clear that in innovation, interpretation, and plastic effect this youthful organization has achieved real distinction. Furthermore, the international character of its repertoire epitomizes the cosmopolitan spirit of the theatre of to-day.

FLORENCE GILLIAM.

BOOKS.

ANCIENT EGYPT.

AT the very threshold of Egyptian history, authorities disagree on a matter of some eleven hundred years, or a longer period than separates us from King Alfred. For we are now dealing not with the decades of normal epochs but with a stretch of centuries more than twice as long as the entire Christian era. Were we living in the year 1923 of Egyptian history, we should still be one thousand years before the birth of the notorious King Tut-ankh-amen. Furthermore, this immense period of time presents an unbroken continuity of culture and tradition. To the Egyptian of the first cen-

tury after Christ the hieroglyphics of the year 2500 B. C. were as intelligible as contemporary writing. When we compare this fact with our own difficulty in deciphering the idiom of Chaucer, we may approximate the ratio between Egyptian chronology and our own, and may realize the truth of the saying that the modern world is a pygmy on a giant's shoulders.

I invite these rather hackneyed comparisons merely to illustrate the difficulties that beset the historian. So few are the facts which have been distilled from the huge vapour of conjecture overhanging the Nile, that any history of Egypt must resolve itself into an attempt to enliven tedious lists of kings and conquests. Mrs. Quibell, in her "*Egyptian History and Art*"¹ has adopted the method of showing the influence of political development on the arts, with especial reference to those objects which are on view in the various museums. The result is a thoroughly readable volume, more valuable, perhaps, as a guide to the collections than as a history, for the inevitable confusion that arises from any attempt to cover these vast periods in two hundred-odd pages is increased by the dual character of the work. Her admirable chapter on the development of the tomb reveals her ability to condense clearly and interestingly, and, in this case, summarizes all the available material on a very important problem.

The problem is this: how did a nation leap from pottery-making and mat-weaving into the full glories of the sculpture of the Old Empire? Where is the transition between perfection of handicraft and those august granite presences, the immortals of the first five dynasties? Egyptian art was at its highest in those periods which are, historically, the most uncertain. Up to the twelfth dynasty we move in surmise; after the twelfth dynasty and through the Hyksos rule the fog lowers again, and it is not until the eighteenth dynasty that we are dealing with continuous and indisputable facts. Nothing could be more disappointing, since by this time Egypt is culturally on the decline. I have frequently heard scholars contradict the statement of Perrot and Chipiez in their now outmoded "*History of Egyptian Art*," that Egypt presents the strange spectacle of a civilization which apparently began at the zenith and deteriorated through the ages. Yet I have never seen any proof to support the contradiction.

Sir Ernest Wallis Budge,² in his excellent "*History of the Egyptian People*," goes far back before the dynasties to trace the source of this extraordinary development. He shows how the various incursions from the Arabian peninsula, from the deserts, and from the south, blent into the Egyptian race, just as countless tributary streams, each bearing its fertilizing element, combine to form the Nile and the rich mud that gives life to the whole country. Then, after a consideration of the prehistoric Egyptians, whose life seems to have been rather like that of the Indians of our South-west, he leads us hastily past those ghostly names that stand for the pre-dynastic kings, and into the presence of the first King of the North and the South, Menes, the traditional door-keeper of Egyptian history (B. C. 4400). Thus we have once more stepped from the early dawn of a civilization into its high noon. The transition is as much a mystery as ever.

Sir Ernest's great lore has stood him in good stead in his treatment of dynastic history. Where the docu-

¹"*Egyptian History and Art*." Mrs. A. A. Quibell. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.00.

²"*A History of the Egyptian People*." "*The Literature of the Egyptians*." E. A. Wallis Budge. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company. \$2.00 each.

ments run thin or become monotonously preoccupied with attacks and counter-attacks, he invokes his knowledge of the customs and religious beliefs which have been his especial study, and offers parallel evidence from the other shadowy empires that share with Egypt the mysterious outland of remote antiquity. Even so, the difficulty of writing history without recourse to human personality is apparent in his pages. It seems strange, therefore, that when an individual figure finally arises from the murk, Sir Ernest greets him with a hostility which not only displays prejudice but also haste in historical conclusion.

I have always supposed that any writer on Egypt would welcome the arrival of King Khu-en-Aten (Ikhnaton, Akhnaton) in his pages. The historian who has plodded down the lonely road of the three thousand years, surrounded by phantoms whose very names are uncertain, is suddenly confronted by an individual who flung his empire to the winds rather than offend the nostrils of his god with the stench of human blood. A fanatic perhaps, but surely a living creature of immense vitality, high desires, and reckless spiritual courage, he boldly preached from his throne doctrines which terrorize our common citizens. Sir Ernest thus summarizes the character of "the first individual in history": "He was of a highly nervous and sensitive disposition, lacking in purpose, firmness, and decision." This is not only unsympathetic; it is unhistorical. The man who pitted himself against the entire ancient world could hardly be lacking in purpose, firmness, and decision.

His acts prove that he was unpractical in every matter connected with the rule of Egypt and her Nubian and Asiatic provinces . . . and the story of the break-up of the great Egyptian Empire owing to his weakness and incapacity is almost the saddest page of Egyptian history. . . . When the envoys returned to their countries and reported that the Pharaoh, whose mere name had struck terror into the Asiatics, was at enmity with all his people, and was devoting all his time to theological matters, and to the founding of new canons of art, and to the selfish enjoyment of a religion that was detested by all the Egyptian priesthoods . . . the enemies of the Egyptian power in western Asia felt that the time of their deliverance was at hand. . . . The King had no help to send, but even if he had had troops available for dispatch, they would never have been sent, for the King hated war in all its forms.

What Sir Ernest does not realize is that he is not in the presence of an ordinary king, to be judged by the conquests and successful depredations of ambition; he is confronted by a lonely warrior in that struggle for the Good which goes on for ever and ever on a battlefield far from the petty turbulences of rising and falling empires. It is quite true that Khu-en-Aten was as unpractical a king for the Egyptian Empire as he would be to-day for the British Empire; but Sir Ernest Budge, in the two or three pages devoted to this reign, has abandoned the rôle of historian and steps from behind the scenes, an enraged Briton railing at a pacifist, dead these thirty-five hundred years! Excellent as is the "History of the Egyptian People," no reader should accept Sir Ernest's account of the Heretic King without supplementing it with Mr. Arthur Weigall's biography.

At the end of his history, Sir Ernest has added some chapters on the religious beliefs, daily life, and character of the Egyptians, which form an appropriate introduction to his compilation of extracts from their literature.

In the first place, the Egyptian was a very religious man. . . . He had a keen sense of humour and was easily

pleased. . . . He loved eating, drinking, music, and dancing, festivals and processions . . . and he enjoyed himself whenever opportunity offered. His morality was of the highest kind and he thoroughly understood his duty toward his neighbour. He was kindly and humane, he fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, lent a boat to the shipwrecked man, protected the widows and orphans and fed the starving animals of the desert. . . . He was slow to anger and disliked military service and war. He had no wish to enlarge the borders of Egypt, except for the loot which raids brought in; he never sought to bestow the blessings of Egyptian civilization on other lands, and he never indulged in missionary enterprises of any kind. His religious toleration was great. He was content to serve God and Pharaoh, and he wished above all things to till his land and do his business in his own way in peace. . . . He had no national spirit, and yet the influence of his beliefs, and religion, literature, and arts and crafts on the civilization of other nations can hardly be overestimated. In one of the least-known periods of the world's history he proclaimed the deathlessness of the human soul, and his country has rightly been named the 'land of immortality.'

The examples of religious texts, fairy tales, autobiographies, stories of travel, and philosophical writing support Sir Ernest's characterization in every detail. The religious writings have been treated at length in the *Freeman*, and I shall pass over them in favour of the more homely literature, the marvels that people told one another and the self-portraits they left for their children.

Says Herkhuf, Duke and High Priest: "I came this day from my town. . . . I builded a house and set up doors. I dug a lake and I planted sycamore trees. The King praised me. My father made a will in my favour. I am perfect." The Duke continues: "If any young man shall come into this tomb as if it were his own property, I will seize him like a goose, and the Great God shall pass judgment upon him for it." On one occasion, Herkhuf, returning from a voyage into the Sudan, apprised his sovereign, Pepi II, that he was bringing with him a dancing pygmy. In a long letter, the son of Ra conceives a most human anxiety to possess the prodigy, and concludes with the instructions:

Bring with thee this pygmy whom thou hast brought from the Land of the Spirits, alive, strong, and healthy, to dance the dance of the god, and to cheer and gratify the heart of the King of the South and North, Neferkara, the ever-living. When he cometh down with thee in the boat, cause trustworthy men to be about him on both sides of the boat, to prevent him from falling into the water.

Many other things the Egyptians brought back from their travels; turquoises and strange metals, incense from the marvellous land of Punt, and cedar wood from Syria, the little apes that chatter like men and are sacred to the sunrise; but most of all they brought back stories for the wonder of their kinsfolk, for though they sometimes journeyed into remote countries, their hearts were never content until they were turned toward the Nile again. "Consider the *kashu* birds that fly to Egypt again and again! And consider how they flock to the cool water brooks! Until the coming of whom must I remain cast aside hither? . . . Surely there must be among you some one who understandeth the language of Egypt?"

Their prose is more highly decorated with images and similes than their poetry, which is impressive in its stark reiteration of a single idea. The verse-forms were in all probability akin to the Hebrew, based on a dominant thought and developed by balanced repetitions. Sir Ernest quotes only one poem, "The Song of the Harper," a magnificent composition judged by any standard, and strongly suggesting the anacreontics

of the Greek Anthology and the Rubaiyat. Why he contented himself with this single example of such an important branch of their literature I can not fathom. "The Song of the Harper," splendid as it is, gives no hint of the homely little verses of the people such as the admonitions to the cattle to keep to their own field and spare the barley, or the fragment about the homesick shepherd: "A homesick shepherd, I waded in the river to converse with the fishes who come swimming from the North, where my country lies."

We also regret the omission from the selections of moral and philosophical literature, of King Amenemhat's shrewd and rather cynical instructions. Our friend Ptah-hotep is here, as wise and as kindly as ever, and several less-known writers, including the anonymous Man Who is Tired of Life. It is no compliment to say that the various precepts are as modern as our own literature, for life in Egypt was far less different from life to-day than most men imagine. What impresses one in these writings is the superior intelligence which the Egyptians brought to bear on the same problems which we face so hesitantly.

The beauty of these writings is beyond description, and Sir Ernest Budge has translated them with his customary delicacy and skill. They reveal the vast imagination which we expect from the Orient and the sure observation of salient detail which characterizes all great writing. Throughout these works, from the biographies of the kings to the speeches of the lowest peasant, the noblest humanism and the loftiest philosophy of life are apparent. A fragment from the life of Rameses III shows clearly the sense of responsibility which the typical Egyptian monarch felt toward his people:

I dispatched inspectors and overseers to the turquoise desert of my mother, the goddess Hathor, the lady of the turquoise. They carried to her silver, gold, byssus, fine linen, and many things as numerous as the sand grains, and laid them before her. And there were brought to me most wonderfully fine turquoises. . . . The like had never been seen before—since kings began to reign. I caused the whole country to be planted with groves of trees and flowering shrubs, and I made the people to sit under the shade thereof. I made it possible for an Egyptian woman to walk with a bold step to the place whither she wished to go; no strange man attacked her, and no one on the road. I made the foot-soldiers and the charioteers sit down in my time, and the Sharanau and the Qehegu were in their towns lying at full length on their backs. . . . Their bows and their weapons of war lay idle in their barracks, and they ate their fill and drank their fill with shouts of joy. I kept alive the whole country, aliens and artisans, gentle and simple, men and women. . . . I had no property that belonged to the people. I served my office of King upon earth.

It is in scattered passages of this sort, rather than in formal histories, that we find the key to open the door of the great dark hall of Egypt.

ROBERT HILLYER.

MR. CANNAN'S NOVELS.

AMONG English writers still under forty Mr. Gilbert Cannan is perhaps one of the most perplexing to appraise. Working with a certain nonchalant yet consecrated attention, indifferent to an easy fame, obstinately idealistic, with a style that neither deeply excites nor yet offends, he has managed to build up gradually through his plays, novels, translations and critical studies, a solid reputation for able workmanship sustained and informed by a tempered imagination.

In "Round the Corner" he has republished the second volume of a series of novels which, beginning with "Little Brother," includes "Three Sons and a Mother," "The

Stucco House," "Time and Eternity," and finally terminates with "Annette and Bennett."

Francis Folyat, an English clergyman, is the gentle, conceding figure about whom the story revolves and eddies in mild currents, sometimes sentimental, sometimes subtle, often full of a deep and delicate insight. Mr. Cannan is, in fact, baffling. Just as one becomes impatient with a tendency to obscure his characters in soft and smothering paddings of generalization, a clear, definite and illuminatingly precise phrase emerges to refute the reader.

In the opening chapters of "Round the Corner"¹ the hero appears merely through a series of assertions. But as the story unfolds and thickens he becomes, indeed, its centre; irresolute yet potential, with a simple and inept goodness, evading, in what the author indicates is the usual Folyat manner, any inward glances too disturbing to his peace. About him move, like vague silhouettes, somewhat too elaborately explained without being clearly revealed, the different members of his family. Only Mrs. Folyat—with Mr. Cannan's genius for depicting predatory women—is sharply defined; and the good clergyman himself gradually assumes a body and reality which fix him permanently in our memories. Frederick is almost too cunningly interpreted; and Serge, whom one suspects of being Mr. Cannan's own favourite, is a sort of didactic and socialized Sanine, a mere voice dropping *pronunciamentos* among arid family monotones. Does he not, perhaps, express the essence of Mr. Cannan's own belief when he writes thus to his father?

Do you remember a night when you and I watched the rest acting an absurd play, and I said involuntarily 'Round the Corner'? Modern life is theatrical. Everybody is playing a part, because they are without understanding. Life for modern men and women is for ever round the corner because they attempt to tackle their affairs with the minds of children, children who believe everything they are told and examine nothing. Unhappily life is a serious business which yields its reward of joy only to simplicity, sincerity, and purity, or if you like the old trinity better—faith, hope and charity.

Yet one can not read "Round the Corner" without being impressed with its massive simplicity, the grave sincerity and intellectual vigour of the author, his power of creating an atmosphere which, though of neutral tone, is yet curiously convincing.

In "Annette and Bennett"² the story moves with a greater intensity, there are fewer distracting centres for speculation; and that motive of love, a love purged and unique, without lust or cunning, which underlies so much of Mr. Cannan's writing, passes lingeringly through the relationship between Annette and Bennett, tranced and withdrawn, and attains at last its full intensity in that strange and mystical companionship existing between Stephen and his grandfather, the James Lowrie of "Three Sons and a Mother" and "The Stucco House." Indeed, one comes strongly to suspect that Mr. Cannan adored in his own childhood such a "tense, tragic, and unique" old man, and came gradually to attach to this legendary figure all the rare and beautiful values of life. He is both a symbol and a memory, and has the unreality of a figure made luminous and grand when refracted through the years. But those deep and delicate ecstasies which pass between him and Stephen have a way of leaving in their wake a series of vacua into which are poured grandiose and sentimental digressions. It is as if Mr. Cannan had been permanently hypnotized by such an old man and could not rid himself of the illusion of a magic and eternal rapport, for ever staunch and impregnable against fate, even

¹ "Round the Corner." Gilbert Cannan. New York: Thomas Seltzer. \$2.00.

² "Annette and Bennett." Gilbert Cannan. New York: Thomas Seltzer. \$2.00.

against death. Yet the moment he looks out through his own unshuttered eyes he demonstrates his extraordinary capacity for sharp and penetrating observation, for irony, even, subtle and imaginative. Certainly his portrayal of Catherine, monumental, insurmountable, could not be surpassed. When James Lowrie speaks of her to his sister in the words that follow, one feels that Mr. Cannan's intuitive clairvoyance has pronounced more convincingly than his oracular desires. Here is symbolized the very movement and body of his story without its implied false *dénouement*; for in spite of the wishes of sensitive and imaginative artists like Mr. Cannan himself, even wayward wildflowers must have in this unyielding, granite-paved world a soil favourable for their nourishment if they are to open to the light of the sun.

She loves her life. She loves the filthy noisy town, the rattle and beat of it, and she's a subtle stupid woman, the stuff of which life is made. It's not the clever ones like you, nor the fiery ones like me, but the subtle stupid ones that feel and live and will beyond themselves, behind and before, and have more knowledge in their rump than you and I in all our wild imagination and book-fed word-ridden brains.

One wishes that Mr. Cannan might purge his writing of a certain heavy dross of grandiloquence, and extend and amplify those authentic moments of penetration that carry one acquiescently through his books, often charmed and nearly always without ennui.

ALYSE GREGORY.

THE PROBLEM OF MR. SITWELL.

MR. SACHEVERELL SITWELL¹ is an English poet of that younger school, customarily described as advanced, which is as much concerned with experiment as with achievement, and which, in giving itself so single-mindedly to experiment, is losing sight more and more of the secondary essential of poetry: that it is to be read, and that it must give its readers, among other satisfactions, that of being understood—understood, that is to say, not necessarily in its logical sequence, but at any rate in its emotional totality, its mood. With his sister, Miss Edith Sitwell, and one or two minor figures, he constitutes, indeed, a very particular current of the modern movement, a current which, while more traditional in technique than the rest, is in general approach the most esoteric of all. Neither Miss Sitwell nor he has yet made comprehensible the emotional atmosphere which hangs so thick over their poetry. That emotion, one feels, is significant, is authentic, but it is not objectivized; and one can not tell why they feel in the way they feel, or account, which is still harder, for the manner in which their emotions are violently and irrelevantly transmuted, or unaccountably annulled in mid-flight, so that rarely does a verse reach its end without giving an impression of emotional disintegration. Either these emotions, one feels, fly too violently, leaping over all the intermediate stages, or else their direction is always checked by some unrealizable factor as soon as it is set; at any rate, what Mr. Sitwell never attains in his shorter no less than his longer poems is that organic quality which would give significance, and with significance, greatness, to poetry so full of beauty as his. If his poetry were sustained, and sustained not only in technical accomplishment but on one of the moods which he mixes so busily, it would be the greatest poetry of our time. But he never begins to do one thing without shortly wishing to do something else which has no relevance to it; and on this plan, for I fear it is a plan, his poems are modelled. I know that Mr. T. S. Eliot has a theory that

the total and therefore disconcerting reactions of the psyche are the most vital interest of the present age, and that poetry should therefore express these and bring them into art. It is a theory perhaps as partial as any other designed to justify the modes of expression invented by a special school. But however that may be, the poetry which it would entail would be a poetry of disintegration, naturally; and Mr. Sitwell's poetry is too deliberately a poetry of disintegration. It may be that he is the victim of his age; it may be that he is only the victim of Mr. Eliot.

At any rate, the disintegration of his emotions is denied in the strictness and beauty of his form; and the contradiction is only another difficulty in the road of a comprehension of his poetry. For the accomplishment of the form wedded to the shapelessness of the content gives a touch of apparent irony to almost all his poetry; the form setting a seal upon and acknowledging the defeat of the emotions, and making that defeat calm and disillusioned, or, at any rate, in appearance so. But an irony achieved in such a way makes one distrustful; and I doubt very much if Mr. Sitwell is so ironical a writer as he seems, and whether, here again, he is not caught in the net of his age or of Mr. Eliot. Irony demands at once more clearness and more subtlety than he displays; the recognition not only of the contradictoriness of the emotions, but also of the deceptive clearness behind which the contradiction lurks. The ironic writer sees the chaos behind the affirmation, but Mr. Sitwell sees the chaos alone, without relief, and not only sees it, but gives way to it. So great, indeed, is the general confusion that one can only ask to which of the antitheses he gives way with most success. In solving that problem we shall perhaps arrive as near as possible to the truth about a poet at present so difficult.

To begin with, then, Mr. Sitwell does not seem to be more than ingenious in verses such as—

A wall of cactus guards the virgin sound
Of piano scales
Ringing the changes
In a small schoolroom,
And on the black keys
Hammering with the hard beak of woodpeckers
On a moss-grown tree.

Most competent writers could accomplish that, if they cared; as they could accomplish

Through the splintered stillness
Sounds like small animals
Creep from their holes.

There is no imagination, no lifting of the spirit above the mediocre vision of the fashionable intellectual, in verse of this kind. Let us see Mr. Sitwell in a less set style, writing with real satisfaction to himself. This is a comic description of Hercules:

He stands in a little stream
damming its current
till the waters well up high and shake themselves
like lions;
now when they're fierce enough
he steps aside:
out they come, rolling, running,
leaping over the heads of the other
salt, weaker waves;
the boats in the bay ride over them
jumping their own horses in the rolling fields of sea;
they pass the vessels and they fall upon an island,
surge over the rocks
with their streaming manes in the wind.

In that there is real comic imagination, real zest, joy in playing with a subject. It embodies a way of looking at the world; it is poetry, because it lacks neither imagination

¹ "The Hundred and One Harlequins," Sacheverell Sitwell. New York: Boni and Liveright. \$1.75.

nor beauty, but it is not a form of poetry in which anything very significant can be said. So I must cite at last the passages where Mr. Sitwell seems to me to be at his best, such as

The gold-hung woods, the gliding clouds that pass,
Dip their tall towers like pennons in the lake.

The sailors in the rigging will be wet with mist,
and the wind stand still like eagles in the air.

The virtues of these lines are the virtues of traditional English poetry; and the truth is that where Mr. Sitwell is good he is good in the traditional style, in the only style in which, one still feels, in spite of so many and such interesting experiments, poetry can be good. His real talent lies here, but it is obscured by his occupation with theories, and above all by the experimental temper of his age: the sad thing is that there is not a single sustained poem in the volume. On the other hand, there is a sufficient body of poetry, though the limbs are scattered, to show that the author has a greater genius for poetry than any of his contemporaries. That is all that can be said about Mr. Sitwell at present, and it is neither too high praise nor excessive condemnation. This is an unhappy age for born poets, though perhaps the happiest of all for those who are not born, but made.

EDWIN MUIR.

AN APPROACH TO SYMBOLISM.

A MACHINE is something which a man introduces to his fellow-men in order to make things easier, more agreeable, or more worth while for them, for himself, or for some third, generally unstipulated, party. It is understood, when a new machine is brought up for our acceptance, that we have been sadly harassed up to that point by the necessity of putting in more time and energy in a given pursuit, such as striking a light, moving from A to B, or discovering our opinion about something, than is advisable in the nature of things; that the machine is a humble slave who would like to cut down this serious expenditure of time and energy; and that, accepting the machine's services, we at once proceed to read Shakespeare and to make other explorations into the higher life. But the automobile, a labour-saving contrivance of obscure intention, insists on the cross-country spin, on getting itself exhibited, and on divers attentions not mentioned in the bond. It saves us five minutes in order that it may dictate the schedule for five hours. It translates our regret that Shakespeare is inaccessible to-day into the impossibility of touching Shakespeare for another month at the least. The tyranny of incidental services should be the one obsession of social reformers.

Of all insidious machines, words are the most insidious. Like the humblest of kitchen help they worm themselves into our good-natured, patronizing confidence and have us at their mercy before we realize that their almost dispensable usefulness has grooved our minds into an infinite tracery of habit. We begin by coining or adapting words for such symbolic uses as the shifting needs and conveniences of custom require. The old need and the old convenience may be left behind for good and all, but the words which once gave them a habitation we do not readily relinquish. They tend to remain as landmarks in a vast but finite and wellnigh inflexible world of symbols, housing new needs and new conveniences, enlarging or contracting their hospitality, yet always mysteriously themselves. Their hypnotized creators have no recourse but to pronounce them sanctuaries and to look anxiously for the divinity that must dwell in each of them. Who has not asked himself the agonizing question, "What does this word *really mean*?"

Every intelligent person knows that words delude as much as they help. Many a heated argument, many a difference of philosophical attitude seems to resolve itself into variously preferred emphases on this or that facet of a word's customary surface-range of significance. Unfortunately for rigorous thinking, this significance is only in part a coldly symbolic reference to the world of experience; more often than not, it also embodies emotive elements that have no place in the objectively verifiable context of things. And yet few accept with due cheer and conviction the notorious failure of a given universe of speech-symbols, a language, to correspond to the universe of phenomena, physical and mental. It is distressing to have two remorseless and even humorous English thinkers¹ discover for us not only sixteen types of aesthetic theory based on as many kinds of definition of the beautiful, but no less than sixteen appreciably distinct ways of understanding the term "meaning."

Messrs. Ogden and Richards are no mere sophists, no clever hair-splitters. It is doubtful if the essential limitations of speech have ever been more vividly, yet sympathetically, realized than in their radical study of symbolism. They make it clear, as no philologist has ever quite made it clear, why an understanding of the nature of speech is a philosophic essential, why every epistemology and every system of logic that does not subject speech, its necessary expressive medium, to a searching critique is built upon the sands, is sooner or later snared in the irrelevances of the medium. Philosophers and psychologists, most of them, have had little patience with the ways of speech. They have either dismissed it as a by-product of human behaviour, as an adventitious code that only grammarians need be seriously interested in, or they have seen in it but a conveniently externalizing expression, an adequate symbolic complement, of a mental life that is open to direct observation. They have been either blindly disdainful or blindfold trustful. Profound insights into the normative influence of speech are not absent from philosophic and linguistic literature—see Fritz Mauthner's little-known "Kritik der Sprachwissenschaft"—but they have been slightly regarded. "The Meaning of Meaning" is written from the angle of the logician and the psychologist rather than from that of the linguist. It seems more than usually significant, therefore, that the writers have gone so fully into the linguistic factors which are involved in the puzzling processes known as thought and interpretation.

The originality of "The Meaning of Meaning" lies chiefly in this, that it refuses to see a special relation between symbol and "referent" or thing (event) symbolized; further, that it looks upon thinking as the interpreting of "signs," which interpreting is merely the psychological reaction to the "sign" in the light of past and present experience. A "door" may be a thing thought of or referred to, what the authors call a "referent," but it may also be an indication of some other thing or some event or some attitude that has been or is linked with it in a context, physical or psychological or both. In the latter case the "door" (not merely the written or heard symbol "door," but the thought of the door, whether imaged or not) becomes a "sign" or natural symbol for a "referent," such as house or opening or banging or entry into the dining room or whatever else its particular context and direction of reference lead us to. Symbols, as ordinarily understood, are the "signs" of thoughts or references (sign-interpretations) and are "causally" related, in psychological contexts, to these references somewhat as the sign-interpretations themselves are related, again "causally," to the "referents." The relation between a symbol (say, the word "door") and a referent (say, a door or this

¹ "The Meaning of Meaning: a Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism." C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. \$3.75.

door) is merely imputed, even fictitious. The thought of Messrs. Ogden and Richards is as simple as it is difficult to grasp. It looks away not only from the universals of the realist, but from the more innocent "concepts" (abstracted short-hand references) of the conceptualist and orthodox linguist as well. It pins its faith to the closest possible psychological scrutiny of experienced contexts and feels its way with the canniest of "canons of symbolization."

New sciences are adumbrated in this book. They are a general theory of signs (a psychological approach to the problems of epistemology); a theory of symbolism; and, as the most important special development of a general theory of symbolism, a broader theory of language than the philologists have yet attempted. In an admirable chapter on "Symbol Situations" the writers make it abundantly clear that language is only in part a coherent system of symbolic reference. To a far greater extent than is generally realized language serves also effective and volitional purposes. Perhaps a criticism may be ventured at this point. It is true that the *function* of language is not in practice a purely symbolic or referential one, but is it not a highly significant fact, none the less, that its *form* is so essentially of symbolic pattern? Most students of language, aside from somewhat naïve teleologists like Professor Jespersen, are inclined to be more interested in the form than in the function of speech, but, as Messrs. Ogden and Richards might reflect, that is perhaps their private weakness. In any event, the psychology of the varying, yet eventually equivalent, forms of linguistic expression is a fascinating subject. Little of real importance seems yet to have been said about it.

EDWARD SAPIR.

MEPHISTOPHELES AND THE BRUTE.

By this time we have all grown accustomed to the fact that man is one among the animals, yet we still cherish the belief (perhaps illusory) that there is some distinctively human excellence which is denied to the brute creation. If they had votes, we should cease to speak of the "lower animals," as we ceased to speak of the "lower classes" at the moment when they were enfranchised. But until that day we are free to say what we think regarding the superiority of man. Formerly, men alone had souls and free will, in consequence of which they sinned and were (with few exceptions) burnt in an eternal fire. This prerogative seems to us less attractive than it did to our ancestors, who must have hated each other even more fiercely than Lord Curzon hates the Bolsheviks. Some people think that speech is what makes man pre-eminent, but acquaintance with parrots and politicians seems to refute this view. Others think that our intelligence (which in these discussions is assumed to exist) consists in the power of forming associations and habits of a kind impossible to animals. There are a thousand theories concerning what constitutes "reason," but all agree that we possess it and the brutes do not.

In Mr. Santayana's system,¹ it seems that what is distinctively human is scepticism, the Mephistophelian "*Geist der stets verneint*." This is a very attractive view. Since we are animals, we must believe all sorts of things, for that is how animals' instincts are constructed; but since we are not mere animals, we can rise in thought above our instinctive faiths, and see the rationality of doubt. Mr. Santayana sets out the rational case for scepticism most persuasively, in a way from which it would be hard to find a rational escape. He then, with a graceful gesture, surrenders himself to "animal faith," allowing his scepticism, however, to purify it and reduce it to a minimum. His

"animal faith" leads him, not to what are usually considered objects of faith, but to beliefs which animals, by their behaviour, seem to share. Chief of these are the belief in matter and the belief in the uniformity of Nature:

In natural philosophy [he says] I am a decided materialist—apparently the only one living; and I am well aware that idealists are fond of calling materialism, too, metaphysics, in rather an angry tone, so as to cast discredit upon it by assimilating it to their own system. But my materialism, for all that, is not metaphysical. I do not profess to know what matter is in itself, and feel no confidence in the divination of those *esprits forts* who, leading a life of vice, thought the universe must be composed of nothing but dice and billiard-balls. I wait for the men of science to tell me what matter is, in so far as they can discover it.

The attitude is very refreshing, since the great majority of modern philosophers either prove that there is no such thing as matter, or contemptuously inform the men of science that matter is not at all what physics supposes. But it must not be imagined that belief in matter constitutes the whole of Mr. Santayana's philosophy. Matter is only one of the realms of being; there are, besides, the several realms of essence, truth, and spirit. In future volumes, to which the present is a prelude, we are to be told in more detail about these various parts of his system. It is a system which differs from those of the accepted system-makers, from Descartes to Hegel, by the much smaller part which reasoning and argument play in it. This is a gain, since it has become clear that metaphysical reasoning is fallacious reasoning, and that metaphysical opinions ought to be frankly stated as dogmas or assumptions. There is, of course, a possibility of valid reasoning as to whether one assumption entails another, or is at least consistent with it; but there remains in the end a sheer choice between one set of assumptions and another—assuming, as it seems we must, that only "animal faith" can lead us to reject complete scepticism.

There is another respect in which Mr. Santayana's system differs from those of most professional philosophers, namely: that it is wholly sincere. The beliefs accepted on the basis of animal faith are beliefs which in fact persist, whatever arguments may be discovered to show them doubtful. The philosophy professed in the book is the same as the philosophy which the writer accepts practically in daily life:

My criticism [he says] is not essentially a learned pursuit, though habit may sometimes make my language scholastic; it is not a choice between artificial theories; it is the discipline of my daily thoughts and the account I actually give to myself from moment to moment of my own being and of the world around me. I should be ashamed to countenance opinions which, when not arguing, I did not believe. It would seem to me dishonest and cowardly to militate under other colours than those under which I live. Merely learned views are not philosophy; and therefore no modern writer is altogether a philosopher in my eyes, except Spinoza.

This merit of sincerity, in a man of Mr. Santayana's breadth of intellectual sympathy, would suffice to make the book important, even if it stood alone. In fact there are many other merits, notably perspicuity and beauty of style. The philosophy, considered as positive doctrine, is quite as good as any other. It is not science, and not technical; it does not aim at establishing startling new truth; but for that very reason it avoids new error.

BERTRAND RUSSELL.

SHORTER NOTICES.

THE competence of the reporter, however faithfully and skillfully reflected, will never replace the creative faculty in the making of novels. It only manages to render the external elements of the story doubly apparent; it is without depth and

¹ "Scepticism and Animal Faith: Introduction to a System of Philosophy," George Santayana. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$3.50.

richness; and without depth and richness one can have only the counterfeit of reality—never its substance. "Blindfold"¹ by Orrick Johns possesses all the merits of an intelligent application of the reportorial instincts to the art of fiction, but stops far short of noteworthy achievement. There are in the book passages of undeniable fidelity to life, but they are not fused; and consequently the effect of the narrative—instead of being cumulative—is that of a patchwork. The author has chosen a somewhat theatrical method of developing his themes, the result being that the obligation to sound the depths of character becomes doubly important. But he manages only to skim the surface, now at one point and now at another, and so the story slips through his fingers.

L. B.

ASIDE from its pretentious and not quite accurate preface, "A Sheaf from Lermontov,"² is a fairly representative collection of Lermontov's lyrical poems. The translator's feeling for words might have stood him in better stead but for his endeavour to retain the metrical form of the original. Translators of Slavic poetry into English have been more felicitous when departing from the original metres, if only for the reason that they have not been tempted to pad their sentences with hackneyed adjectives in order to render the monosyllabic English line equal in length to the polysyllabic Slavic. Certain of Mr. Robbins's verses are miraculously fine, preserving the whimsical melodiousness of the Russian; but the book contains a multitude of trite adjectives and hollow adverbs that would have made Lermontov, the delicate translator of "Ueber allen Gipfeln," of Heine, Byron, Chénier, gnash his teeth. The "Song of Kalashnikov," with its charming tone of sixteenth-century minstrels, is flat and wooden in Mr. Robbins's version, to which one must prefer that of E. L. Voynich, published years ago. Even Professor Archibald Coolidge has been more successful with the lyric beginning "Alone I walk," the opening line of which Mr. Robbins clumsily renders by "All alone I walk upon the roadway"; the "all" appearing six times in the poem for purposes of syllabic faithfulness. It must be admitted, however, that to one who reads between the lines and with allowances, the conscientious booklet of Mr. Robbins will suggest the personality of Lermontov, his pessimistic pantheism, his morbid sensitiveness, his melancholy demonism.

A. K.

GREGORIO MARTINEZ SIERRA is one of the important figures of the contemporary Spanish theatre. To it he has brought a creative personality that is feminine in the better sense of that word; perhaps this femininity is due to the constant collaboration of his wife, although the exact nature of the marriage of these two minds has not thus far been divulged. In the plays assembled for the two-volume collection³ by which he is introduced to English readers—a truly representative selection which has been Englished with more than a little of the delicate charm that characterizes the originals—Señor Martínez Sierra appears as a smiling ironist, peculiarly liable to lapses of sentimentality, optimistic despite an acquaintance with life that has not skirted its pestilential marshes, whimsical, rarely dull, and now and then genuinely illuminative for all his airy manner. At his worst he is capable of much sugary *marivaudage*, the tell-tale false note, the fluff of drama. "The Cradle Song," which has been produced in New York, despite a novel opening and a touching close, is chiefly bathed in rosy sentimentality. So, too, "Madame Pepita," while it has a diverting start and some fine farcical moments, progresses to a sentimental issue. Of the nine plays, "The Two Shepherds" and "The Kingdom of God" attain the highest level; in the first, the dramatist, without any loss of his innate delicacy, so stiffens the fibre of his material that it seems woven from the very stuff of life. The humour is simple, elemental; the sentiment is honest and earthy; the satire humanly effective. In the second, the dramatist unfolds a tale of womanly renunciation and service that avoids the bogs into which "Wife to a

Famous Man" so sadly stumbles. Few of our own playwrights have the gift of this fearless tenderness, readily as they yield to its counterfeit. "The Romantic Young Lady" (in the original, "An August Night's Dream") was presented recently in Boston, with deserved success. It is like a sonata played upon a spinet, compact of delicacy and substance. If Señor Martínez Sierra is a playwright dealing in surfaces and atmospheres, he feels what lies beneath and beyond, and in his best work communicates that intuitive knowledge.

I. G.

A REVIEWER'S NOTEBOOK.

IN one of his recent essays in the *Freeman* Mr. Veblen remarked that his observations on the American country town had an air of the depreciatory that was not at all in correspondence with his own intentions. It was due, he said, to the fact that Americans are not accustomed to plain speaking in these matters. Our countrymen, as we know, cherish a romantic view of themselves and their activities: an American spade, to the majority of them, is no mere instrument of toil—it is a sword, a cutlass, a glittering implement of knighthood, and consequently to call it a spade is to challenge their fondest prepossessions. To thoroughly romantic people even a genuine compliment is an insult, for the romantic soul dwells in the region of hyperbole, it does not understand the force of understatement, and a genuine compliment is usually expressed in the language of prose. It is not too much to say that America is traditionally romantic in this sense, and that the fact explains the apparent censoriousness of much of our recent social criticism. Some of this criticism has really been censorious, by reaction; but most of it has only seemed so. If we had been used to a realistic view of our affairs, we should have accepted it, and even enjoyed it.

THE fact is that we have been as a people singularly unconscious. America has "just grown"—in the manner of the British Empire perhaps, but certainly in a very different manner from England itself, or France, Germany, Italy, Russia or any other European country. It has grown by sheer activity, expansion, immigration, without forethought, afterthought, reflection or criticism of any kind. That is to say—since no population is ever conscious of itself as a population, save, perhaps, in times of war—it has had no governing and directing minority more conscious than the multitude, no class of thinkers who, having no authority necessarily in an administrative sense, might yet have exercised an authority over public opinion, interpreting and criticizing the movements of society in the light of history and general principles and arousing in the more intelligent and articulate classes a sense of what is really happening. To take an illustration—the United States has never "intended" to become an empire and few Americans are aware, even to-day, that it is an empire, with immense colonial possessions, protectorates and all the other paraphernalia of imperialism. All this has occurred, so to speak, automatically, because, while it has been contrary to the professed genius of the country, no strong and articulate minority has shown the people what was taking place under their very noses. One has only to compare the few and feeble protests that were raised in America at the time of the annexation of the Philippines—the "pragmatic" position assumed, for example, by William James—with the outburst of resentment and remonstrance, of bitter satire and impassioned poetry evoked in England by the Boer War to note the difference between a conscious and an unconscious society. Nor is the case weakened when we remember that in the England of 1897 imperialism had been for generations a deliberate national policy.

¹ "Blindfold." Orrick Johns. New York: Lieber and Lewis. \$2.00.

² "A Sheaf from Lermontov." Translated by J. J. Robbins. New York: Lieber and Lewis. \$1.50.

³ "Plays of G. Martínez Sierra." English versions by Helen and Harley Granville-Baker and John Garrett Underhill. Two vols. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company. \$7.00.

I HAVE taken my illustration from the political field, but in matters of this kind it makes little difference where we begin. Our entire social history since the Civil War has been a triumphant illustration of the policy of indifference: from one motive or another the individual has stood aside and let things take their course. To a large extent this has been true of American thought from the beginning: whether optimistic, as with Emerson and Whitman, or pessimistic, as with Henry Adams and Mark Twain, it has always been *fatalistic*. It has assumed either that things were "coming out all right" because Americans were Americans, or that things were coming out all wrong because nothing could stop them from doing so, because social life itself is a mistake (Mark Twain) or because evolution is a matter simply of thermodynamics (Henry Adams). All these attitudes, I say, are fatalistic, because they either beg the question of human control or deny its possibility; and together they have formed the various strands of a national tradition in which the critical intellect has played no part whatsoever. That America must and will be perfect just by being itself, or that it is eternally doomed and damned: these are the two poles between which, to this day, the public opinion of the country oscillates. The refined people, the very refined, are convinced—though they never say so in public—that America is already doomed and damned. The rest are equally convinced, not that it will be, but that it already is, perfect. Mr. Meredith Nicholson is a typical spokesman of this latter group, the majority, and we know how Mr. Meredith Nicholson feels. "If there is any manifestation on earth of a divine ordering of things," he says, "it is here in America."

Now this is the attitude that Matthew Arnold described as "vulgar, and not only vulgar but retarding"; and retarding it assuredly is if, in order to go somewhere, to get somewhere, to advance, to develop, we must first have an inner conviction that we have not already arrived. If American life as we know it is a manifestation of a divine ordering of things there is nothing for Americans to do but to continue to manifest their divinity. But is American life divine? Is it, in fact, so very different from the life of England, France, Germany, Russia that on this side of the Atlantic the comments of a Ruskin, a Renan, a Nietzsche, a Tolstoy would have been sheer impertinences? The prosperous middle class in every country is inclined to look upon itself and its own fatness with an over-kindly eye, but in no other country has the prosperous middle class been able to "get away with it" as it has in America. We know how America looks to the rest of the world: Mr. Yone Noguchi is the spokesman of all contemporary humanity when he describes it as "floating comfortably on the ocean all by itself, as if a well-fed seal or lazy iceberg." Those who have an alert interest in the creative life in America, in the creative rôle of America, are not slow to see how perilous such a situation is; and if they seem to have been more savagely censorious than the case demands it is fair to remember that they have been making up for lost time.

For the prosperous American middle class is not really to blame for its own self-complacency. It has simply not been aroused, as the middle class of every foreign country has been, to a sense of its limitations. Heine never permitted the Germans to forget how much they had to learn; no one was ever more outspoken than Nietzsche in regard to "what the Germans lack." The French are complacent enough; but Renan never ceased to remind them of their "incurable religious mediocrity," of the "alternations of levity and dullness, of narrow timidity and foolish temerity" which are among the features of the

French intellect. Arnold, Ruskin, Carlyle kept their guns steadily trained on the weaknesses of the English character; and while Ibsen lived how many illusions in regard to its own superiority was Norway suffered to cherish? Merely to mention these names is to suggest how uniformly and invariably our American fur has been rubbed the right way: Emerson, Lowell, Whitman deplored the imperfections of our social life, but no one would assert that their criticism was at once sustained and drastic. They were, these men, primarily something other than critics, even Thoreau was primarily something other than a critic; and between their day and ours scarcely a voice was raised in America that could be described as even mildly critical.

No doubt in the beginning this attitude of faith, hope and charity contributed something to the civilization of America. A new country is obliged to affirm its existence, to believe in itself: had the America of three generations ago seen itself as its candid European critics saw it, as its own cultivated minds saw it in the privacy of their own souls, it would have lost heart entirely, for with nations as with individuals nothing is more paralysing than a premature self-consciousness. Our old writers were fully aware of the unsatisfactoriness of our life, but they knew that it was useless to expect too much of a new country, they saw that it was too much in the grip of natural forces for criticism to have any effect upon it; and that is why they were *not* critics. Meanwhile, with few exceptions, the immigrants from Europe belonged to the inarticulate classes for whom it was enough, or to whom it seemed enough, that the New World afforded them economic opportunities they had not possessed in the old. We know how these earlier immigrants expressed themselves: such works as "The Promised Land" and "The Making of an American" not only contributed immensely to our national self-esteem but served as the final proof that America was vastly superior in all essentials to Europe. In *this* realm of human nature it never rains but it pours.

BUT this is not the place for a sociological treatise. I was merely struck by Mr. Veblen's remark: it reminded me of something I have often felt—how strange, how ferocious, how positively infamous the critical attitude of the American writers of the last decade must appear in the eyes of those who have never questioned the popular intellectual tradition of the country. It is not ferocious, it is not infamous, it is merely realistic. It is, moreover, inevitable and the product of natural causes; it is even, one can not doubt, the harbinger of a genuine growth. The division between the two great camps of modern American writers is a division between those who are satisfied with a national state of adolescence and those who exact of America the characteristics and responsibilities of a mature nation; and if the latter appear to be a little rough and importunate it is because they are obliged to shake out of a deep sleep a population that should have been kept awake by an unbroken succession of gentle proddings. But this is certain: the critical effort of the present generation will not begin to attain its object as long as it merely maddens people. The great critics have convinced their readers in spite of themselves; it is their ability to do so indeed that has made them great. For a long time in this country the critics and the people are destined to wage the blindest kind of warfare; for the critical attitude in the general American mind has virtually perished from disuse. But all this is mere spade-work, antecedent to the real task of criticism. On the day when our critics forget this they will already have lost the battle.

Advertisement.

A FEW years ago we died more frequently than now of the "bends," "phossy jaw," hookworm and similar diseases, mostly occupational. Is it possible that each and every one of the germs succumbed to the white light of publicity? Even a less social but personal affair, the removal of the vermiform appendix, figures with reduced éclat and never even gets into the newspapers unless the owner of the appendix happens to hold office or many bonds. It is quite likely that the diminished enthusiasm for being surgically separated from part of oneself is due, in a measure, to the agitation that resulted from the ardour of too fervid sawbones. At any rate, appendicitis has "gone out."

A hazy recollection of our youth includes the tapeworm which, if not exactly a common household pet, was yet a topic of not uncommon discussion. Remedies were advertised, usually with an illustration calculated to make the boldest quake, even though the day of provoking fear by the warning that "four out of five" might become victims, had not yet dawned. Has the tapeworm yielded to the cures, or is it merely in hibernation until the popularity of pyorrhea, weak back and eczema wane?

Diseases, whether physical, political, social or economic, have their little day. They occupy the centre of the stage and disappear without leaving a trace, yet they are as sure to return as top hats and hoop skirts. (Think of the subway!)

Even the most intelligent persons need to be reminded that things exist even if they are unseen, for it is but human to accept the popular belief that the invisible is nonexistent, except for God, and many believe in him only because they fear not to do so. It is the function of magazines that help people in their thinking to remind them of the eternal rhythm in the world of ideas, the ebb and flow of thought and the inevitable recurrence of certain phenomena, and to interpret life by standards that have survived severe tests, including that of time. The FREEMAN makes no conceited gesture when it offers itself as such an interpreter: it is not an oracle, it is not infallible, but it is chosen and ordained of thousands in a spirit essentially democratic and thus possesses a mandate which it seeks weekly to justify.

And you? If you believe in the FREEMAN sufficiently, bring its light to one more person groping in this night of ignorance. Remember:

the FREEMAN is a success only if you make it grow.

In next week's FREEMAN:

CHURCH AND STATE IN SOVIET RUSSIA

by WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN.

A fair-minded statement of a situation not easily comprehended from the newspaper-accounts of recent events.

A good number with which to begin a subscription for a friend.

Send his name and \$6.00 for 52 numbers to

THE FREEMAN, NEW YORK.